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THE
SHÁHNÁMA OF FIRDAUSÍ

DONE INTO ENGLISH BY

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AND

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THE
PALACE
OF
POETRY

*"The homes that are the dwellings of to-day
Will sink 'neath shower and sunshine to decay,
But storm and rain shall never mar what I
Have built—the palace of my poetry."*

FIRDAUSÍ



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CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS	PAGE 3
NOTE ON PRONUNCIATION	5

THE KAIÁNIAN DYNASTY (*continued*)

GUSHTÁSP—

PART I. THE COMING OF ZARDUHSHT AND THE WAR WITH ARJÁSP

SECT.

1. How Firdausí saw Dakikí in a Dream	30
2. How Luhrásp went to Balkh and how Gushtásp sat upon the Throne	31
3. How Zarduhsht appeared and how Gushtásp ac- cepted his Evangel	33
4. How Gushtásp refused to Arjásp the Tribute for Írán	35
5. How Arjásp wrote a Letter to Gushtásp	37
6. How Arjásp sent Envoys to Gushtásp	40
7. How Zarír made Answer to Arjásp	42
8. How the Envoys returned to Arjásp with the Letter of Gushtásp	43
9. How Gushtásp assembled his Troops	47
10. How Júnásp foretold the Issue of the Battle to Gushtásp	48
11. How Gushtásp and Arjásp arrayed their Hosts	54
12. The Beginning of the Battle between the Íránians and Túránians, and how Ardshír, Shírá, and Shídas were slain	56
13. How Ghrámf, Júnásp's Son, and Nivzár were slain	58
14. How Zarír, the Brother of Gushtásp, was slain by Bídirafsh	61
15. How Asfandiyár heard of the Slaying of Zarír	65
16. How Asfandiyár went to battle with Arjásp	66
17. How Nastúr and Asfandiyár slew Bídirafsh	69
18. How Arjásp fled from the Battle	71
19. How the Turkinans received Quarter from As- fandiyár	72

PART I. THE COMING OF ZARDUHSHT AND THE WAR WITH
ARJÁSP (*continued*)

SECT.	PAGE
20. How Gushtásp returned to Balkh	74
21. How Gushtásp sent Asfandiyár to all the Provinces, and how the Folk received from him the good Religion	76
22. How Gurazm spake Evil of Asfandiyár	78
23. How Jámásp came to Asfandiyár	80
24. How Gushtásp imprisoned Asfandiyár	82
25. How Gushtásp went to Sistán and how Arjásp arrayed his Host the second Time	85
26. The Words of Dakíkí being ended, Firdausí resumeth, praising Sháh Mahmúd and criticis- ing Dakíkí	87
27. How the Host of Arjásp marched to Balkh and how Luhrásp was slain	89
28. How Gushtásp heard of the Slaying of Luhrásp and led his Army toward Balkh	93
29. How Gushtásp was put to Flight by Arjásp	96
30. How Jámásp visited Asfandiyár	98
31. How Asfandiyár saw his Brother Farshidward	103
32. How Asfandiyár came to the Mountain to Gushtásp	106
33. How Gushtásp sent Asfandiyár the second Time to fight Arjásp	114

PART II. THE STORY OF THE SEVEN STAGES

1. The Praise of Mahmúd the great King	118
--	-----

THE SEVEN STAGES OF ASFANDIYÁR—

2. The First Stage. How Asfandiyár slew two Wolves	119
3. The Second Stage. How Asfandiyár slew two Lions	124
4. The Third Stage. How Asfandiyár slew a Dragon	125
5. The Fourth Stage. How Asfandiyár slew a Witch	128
6. The Fifth Stage. How Asfandiyár slew the Símurgh	131
7. The Sixth Stage. How Asfandiyár passed through the Snow	134
8. The Seventh Stage. How Asfandiyár crossed the River and slew Gurgsár	139
9. How Asfandiyár went to the Brazen Hold in the Guise of a Merchant	143
10. How the Sisters of Asfandiyár recognised him	147

PART II THE STORY OF THE SEVEN STAGES (*continued*)

SECT.		PAGE
11	How Bishútan assaulted the Brazen Hold . . .	150
12.	How Asfandiyár slew Arjásp . . .	152
13.	How Asfandiyár slew Kuhram . . .	155
14.	How Asfandiyár wrote a Letter to Gushtásp and his Answer . . .	159
15.	How Asfandiyár returned to Gushtásp . . .	161

PART III. THE STORY OF ASFANDIYÁR'S FIGHT WITH RUSTAM

1.	How Asfandiyár ambitioned the Throne and how Gushtásp took Counsel with the Astrologers .	167
2.	How Asfandiyár demanded the Kingdom from his Father . . .	170
3.	How Gushtásp answered his Son .	172
4.	How Katáyún counselled Asfandiyár .	175
5.	How Asfandiyár led a Host to Zábul .	177
6.	How Asfandiyár sent Bahman to Rustam . .	179
7.	How Bahman came to Zál . . .	182
8.	How Bahman gave the Message to Rustam .	184
9.	How Rustam made Answer to Asfandiyár .	187
10.	How Bahman returned . . .	190
11.	The Meeting of Rustam and Asfandiyár .	192
12.	How Asfandiyár summoned not Rustam to the Feast . . .	196
13.	How Asfandiyár excused himself for not summoning Rustam to the Feast . . .	198
14.	How Asfandiyár spake Shame of the Race of Rustam . . .	200
15.	How Rustam answered Asfandiyár, praising his own Race and his Deeds . . .	202
16.	How Asfandiyár boasted of his Ancestry .	204
17.	How Rustam vaunted his Valour . . .	207
18	How Rustam drank Wine with Asfandiyáú . .	210
19.	How Rustam returned to his Palace . . .	215
20.	How Zál counselled Rustam . . .	218
21.	How Rustam fought with Asfandiyár . . .	222
22.	How the Sons of Asfandiyár were slain by Zawára and Farámarz . . .	225
23.	How Rustam fled to the Heights . . .	229
24.	How Rustam took Counsel with his Kin . .	234
25.	How the Símurgh succoured Rustam . . .	235
26.	How Rustam went back to fight Asfandiyár . .	240

PART III. THE STORY OF ASFANDIYÁR'S FIGHT WITH

RUSTAM (*continued*)

SECT	PAGE
27. How Rustam shot Asfandiyár in the Eyes with an Arrow	243
28. How Asfandiyár told his last Wishes to Rustam	247
29. How Bishútan bare the Coffin of Asfandiyár to Gushtásp	251
30. How Rustam sent Bahman back to Írán	256

PART IV. THE STORY OF RUSTAM AND SHAGHÁD

1. The Prelude	261
2. How Rustam went to Kábul on behalf of his Brother Shaghád	263
3. How the King of Kábul dug Pits in the Hunting-ground and how Rustam and Zawára fell therein	268
4. How Rustam slew Shaghád and died	271
5. How Zál received News of the Slaying of Rustam and Zawára, and how Farámarz brought their Coffins and set them in the Charnel-house	273
6. How Farámarz led an Army to avenge Rustam and slew the King of Kábul	276
7. How Rúdába lost her Wits through Mourning for Rustam	278
8. How Gushtásp gave the Kingdom to Bahman and died	279

BAHMAN, SON OF ASFANDIYÁR

1. How Bahman sought Revenge for the Death of Asfandiyár	283
2. How Bahman put Zál in Bonds	285
3. How Farámarz fought with Bahman and was put to Death	287
4. How Bahman released Zál and returned to Írán	288
5. How Bahman married his own daughter Humái and appointed his Successor	290

HÚMÁI

1. How Humái cast away her son Dáráb on the River Farát in an Ark	294
2. How the Launderer brought up Dáráb	296
3. How Dáráb questioned the Launderer's Wife about his Parentage, and how he fought against the Rúmans	300

HUMÁI (*continued*)

SECT.		PAGE
4.	How Rashnawád learned the Case of Dáráb . . .	302
5.	How Dáráb fought against the Host of Rúm . . .	305
6.	How Humái recognised her Son	307
7.	How Humái seated Dáráb upon the Throne . . .	309
INDEX		313

THE SHÁHNAMA

ABBREVIATIONS

C	—Macan's edition of the Sháhnáma.
L	—Lumsden's do.
P.	—Mohl's do.
T.	—Tíhrán do
V.	—Vullers' do.

- BGDF.** The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.
By Edward Gibbon. Edited by J. B. Bury, M.A.
- BLHP.** A Literary History of Persia. By Edward G. Browne,
M.A.
- DZA.** Professor Darmesteter's Trans. of the Zandavasta in the
Sacred Books of the East. References to Parts¹ and
pages.
- GYZ.** Geiger. Das Yátkār-i Zarīrān und sein Verhältniss zum
Šāhnūme Sitzungsberichte der philosophisch-philolo-
gischen und historischen Classe der k. b. Akademie der
Wissenschaften zu München. 1890. Bd. II. Heft I.
p. 43.
- HEP.** Essays on the Sacred Language, Writings, and Religion
of the Parsis. By Martin Haug, Ph.D. Edited and
enlarged by E. W. West, Ph.D.
- HLP.** The Legend of Perseus. By E. S. Hartland.
- HRVP.** Veterum Persarum . . . Religionis Historia. Ed. 2nd.
By Thomas Hyde.
- JZ.** Zoroaster. By A. V. Williams Jackson.
- MHP.** History of Persia. By Sir John Malcolm, G.C.B.
- MM.** Maçoudi: Les Prairies d'Or. Texte et Traduction par C.
Barbier de Meynard et Pavet de Courteille.

¹ The second edition of Part I. is referred to unless otherwise
specified.

- NIN. Das Iranische Nationalepos von Theodor Nöldeke.
- NT. Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasaniden.
Aus der Arabischen Chronik des Tabari übersetzt und
mit ausführlichen Erläuterungen und Ergänzungen
versehn von Th. Nöldeke.
- RK. The Koran: Translated from the Arabic. By J. M.
Rodwell. Second edition.
- RP. Records of the Past. First Series.
- SM. History of the Early Kings of Persia. . . . Translated
from the original Persian of Mirkhond . . . By David
Shea.
- STD. The Dabistán . . . translated . . . by David Shea and
Anthony Troyer.
- WLS. In the Land of the Lion and Sun. . . By C. J.
Wills, M.D.
- WPR. The Pársí Religion. By John Wilson.
- WPT. Dr. E. W. West's Trans. of the Pahlaví Texts in the Sacred
Books of the East. Reference to Parts and pages.
- ZT. Chronique de Abou-Djafar-Mo'hammed-Ben-Djarir-Ben-
Yezid Tabari. Traduite sur la version Persane d'Abou-
'Ali Mo'hammed Bel'amí par M. Hermann Zotenberg

NOTE ON PRONUNCIATION

á as in "water."

í as in "pique."

ü as in "rude."

ú as in "servant."

í as in "sin."

u as in "foot."

ai as *i* in "time."

au as *ou* in "cloud."

g is always hard as in "give."

kh as *ch* in the German "buch."

zh as *z* in "azure."

II

THE KAIANIAN DYNASTY

(Continued)

XV

GUSHTÁSP

HE REIGNED ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY
YEARS

ARGUMENT

The advent of Zarduhsht is described. Gushtásp is converted, and war ensues between him and the Túránian king Arjásp. Gushtásp is helped out of many straits by his valiant son, Asfandiyár, who is incited to exertion by the promise of the kingship. Gushtásp, however, always finds fresh excuses for delaying his own abdication, and at length, being much pressed by Asfandiyár, sends him to bring Rustam in chains to court, with tragic results to all parties concerned. Gushtásp bestows the kingship on Bahman, the son of Asfandiyár, and dies.

NOTE

The reign of Gushtásp falls naturally into four Parts. It is not, however, so divided, as indicated by the independent numbering of the couplets of each Part, either in the Vullers-Landauer text, from which our translation is made, or in that of Mohl. In Macan's edition the couplets are not numbered. The division into Parts is a convenient arrangement. We have adopted it in the present instance, and propose to do so in future cases when the reign is long and the subject-matter lends itself to such treatment.

To the student of the *Sháhnáma* the reign is one of much interest for many reasons. It contains a fine example of poetic justice, inasmuch as Gushtásp, having embittered the life of his own father,¹ now finds himself, owing to rash promises,² placed in a similar quandary with regard to his own son, Asfandiyár. There is the question, too, as to the position that he occupies

¹ See Vol. iv. p. 318 *seq.*

² See pp. 66, 97, 107, 114.

from the standpoint of history. We have the account of the advent of Zarduhsht (Zoroaster), his preaching and the consequent conversion of Gushtásp, and, what renders this still more interesting, not in Firdausí's own words but in those of his contemporary Dakíkí, whose untimely death gave Firdausí the great opportunity of his life—one of which he was prompt to avail himself. Here, too, for the first time, we are enabled to compare the Sháhnáma with an extant Pahlavi version of the same subject-matter, and can see for ourselves how closely Dakíkí followed his authorities, just as later on we shall be enabled to compare Firdausí's own work with a similar extant Pahlavi version, when we come to the Ashkánian dynasty and the account therein given of the rise to power of Ardashír Pápakún, the founder of the Sásánian dynasty. Here, too, the great champion of priestly tradition—Asfandiyár—is introduced and brought face to face with the great hero of popular tradition—Rustam. In this reign, too, the long life of the latter hero comes to an end, and Firdausí tells us whence he obtained the information that enabled him to include his account of that end in the poem. We have also in his continuation of Dakíkí what we may regard, not, indeed, as the earliest of his literary efforts, but the earliest in intentional connexion with the Sháhnáma. It is interesting, too, to compare the styles of the two poets, though that is rather for the student of the original than for the reader of the translation.

For Gushtásp, see Vol. II. p. 9. We may, however, add a few words on the way in which some of the more salient features of the historical epoch associated with the names of Cyrus and Darius Hystaspis are indicated in the legendary accounts of Kai Khusrau, Luhrásp, and Gushtásp. The Achæmenids, as is well known, ruled in a double collateral line—an elder and a younger. With the death of Cambyses, the son of Cyrus, the elder line came to an end. The rightful heir, so to speak, was the head of the younger line—Hystaspes—a man, as later events showed, not lacking in vitality and courage, for as Governor of Parthia he maintained the cause of his house energetically during the troublous times that followed the accession of his more famous son, Darius I., to the throne. Why Hystaspes stood aside in favour of his son it is difficult to see, but the facts, if we leave out of account the reign of Cambyses, seem clearly reproduced in legendary form in the Sháhnáma. Kai Khusrau, before his passing, appointed a distant, little-known Kaiánian collateral—Luhrásp—to succeed him, but Luhrásp was overshadowed completely by his more famous son, Gushtásp, in whose favour ultimately he retired. In a time of stress later on, however, he is represented as fighting gallantly. Again, the period ushered in

by the death of Cambyses was one of great religious and political disturbance. Magism became very prominent in the person of the false Smerdis, and, whatever interpretation we put upon the statement in the Bihistún inscription, that he destroyed the temples of the gods and that Darius restored them,¹ it is evident that some grave religious question was at stake. Further, the accession of Darius was the signal for a series of revolts extending over several years and involving nearly the whole empire. It was only after a most desperate struggle that the genius of Darius triumphed. Among his other enemies, he had to contend against the northern foe—the Scythians—and later on led a famous expedition against them to the banks of the Danube. These three features of his reign—the religious question, civil war, and wars with the Scythians—are all indicated in a legendary form in the reign of Gushtásp. The religious question is very prominent, the civil war is represented by the fact that the leaders on both sides have Persian names,² while the wars themselves are waged against a northern foe. Again, the information that we possess seems to indicate that Darius was the Constantine the Great of his time, and changed his religion in the course of his reign³ just as Gushtásp is represented as doing in the *Sháh-náma*. Zarduhsht “came” to Darius in a spiritual sense just as he came in the flesh, traditionally, to Gushtásp. Lastly, Darius married the widow of Cambyses—Atossa. There is no trace of this in the *Sháh-náma*, where Gushtásp is represented as marrying Cæsar’s daughter, Katáyún, but it is worth mentioning with a view of connecting him with Darius Hystaspis that, as West has suggested,⁴ the name of Gushtásp’s wife in the *Zandavasta*—Hutaosa—bears a striking resemblance to that of Darius’ wife.

Many of the chief characters of this reign appear in the *Zandavasta*, with the exception of Zál and his descendants, who were either not known to, or were ignored by, its compilers. Luhrásp appears as *Aurvat-aspa*, but is mentioned merely as the father of Gushtásp.

Gushtásp, who appears as *Vistáspa*, had one of its Books—the *Vistásp-súst*—named after him. It dealt with his conversion by Zarduhsht (Zoroaster) and his subsequent war with Arjásp. It is partly extant.⁵ Gushtásp has the distinction of appearing in the *Gáthas*—the oldest part, as generally is held, of the *Zandavasta*. Elsewhere in it he is represented as praying that he may

¹ See Vol. I. p. 58.

² *Id.* ii. 9.

³ *Id.* i. 59.

⁴ WPT, v. 71, note.

⁵ DZA, i. xxxvi, ii. 324 seq.

overcome and put to flight Arjásp and others.¹ His triumph over them also is recorded.²

Zarír, Gushtásp's brother, appears as Zairi-vairi, and is represented as offering up sacrifices that he may overcome Arjásp.³

Asfandiyár, the most famous of Gushtásp's sons, appears as Spentó-dáta.⁴ He is not nearly so much in evidence as one would expect in view of the important place that he occupies in later tradition, where he becomes a sort of Zoroastrian Khálid, spreading the Faith with fire and sword. The chief credit is given to Gush-tásp himself.

Bishútan, Asfandiyár's brother, appears as Peshó-tanu, and is described as exempt, like Kai Khusrau, from sickness and death.⁵

Gurazm, probably another brother, though the Sháhnáma leaves the exact relationship indefinite, appears as "the holy Kavírazem."⁶ In the Sháhnáma, however, he has an evil reputation as the slanderer of Asfandiyár, who in consequence is imprisoned by Gushtásp.

Humái, Asfandiyár's sister, appears as Huma.⁷

Nastúr, Zarír's son, seems to be the same as "the holy Bastavairi."⁸ If so, we should read Bastúr for Nastúr.

Jámásp, Gushtásp's chief minister, is mentioned in the Gáthas as well as elsewhere in the Zandavasta. He married one of Zarduhsht's daughters,⁹ wrote down the Zandavasta,¹⁰ and succeeded the Prophet as high priest of Írán.¹¹ Further mention will be made of him, Gushtásp, Asfandiyár, and Bishútan below.

Árish, who is merely referred to, appears in the Zandavasta as Erekhsha khshvwi-ishush, and in Pahlaví as Árish Shivítir, *i.e.* "Árish of the swift arrow." He was a famous Íránian archer, and after a war, not mentioned in the Sháhnáma, between Minúchihir and Afrásiyúb, was deputed to settle the frontier between Írán and Túrán, by shooting an arrow from the top of Mount Damáwand, the boundary to be wherever the arrow fell. He shot accordingly. The arrow flew eastward from dawn till noon, and then dropped on the banks of the Jihún (Oxus).¹²

In the Zandavasta, as we have seen already, the foes of the Íránians, *e.g.* Zakhák¹³ and Afrásiyúb,¹⁴ offer sacrifices and pray for boons in just the same way as the Íránians themselves do, and to the same divine beings. Similarly we find Arjásp and his brother Andarimán, who appear in the Zandavasta as Aregat-aspa and

¹ DZA, ii. 79, 117.

² *Id.* 306.

³ *Id.* 80.

⁴ *Id.* 207.

⁵ *Id.* 329.

⁶ *Id.* 207.

⁷ *Id.* 224.

⁸ *Id.* 207 and *note.*

⁹ JZ, 21.

¹⁰ *Id.* 117.

¹¹ *Id.* 136.

¹² DZA, ii. 95 and *note.*

¹³ Vol. i. p. 142.

¹⁴ *Id.* iv. 137.

Vandaremaini respectively, praying for victory over Gushtásp and Zarír¹ It should be mentioned, however, that Arjásp is not called a Túránian, as Afrásiyáb is,² but a *Hvyaona*.³ Who the *Hvyaonas* were is a disputed point Their name has suggested both the Hiong-Nu of Chinese records, who may or may not have been the Huns,⁴ and the Chionitæ of Ammianus Marcellinus, who refers to their political relations with the Sásánian Sháh Sapor II. in the middle of the fourth century A.D.⁵ The identification of the *Hvyaonas*—the *Khyóns* of the Pahlaví Texts and of the *Yátkár-i-Zarírán*⁶—with the Chionitæ is a very probable one, and bears out the view adopted in this work that the legends of the *Sháhnáma* originated, and its chief scene of action lay, at least during most of the mythical period, west of the Caspian.⁷ The Chionitæ are associated with the Gelaní or people of Gílán, by Ammianus Marcellinus,⁸ and Gushtásp is represented in the *Zandavasta* as praying behind the river *Dáitya* for victory over them.⁹ It is certain that the *Dáitya*, which has been identified with the *Aras*,¹⁰ the *Kúr*, and the *Safíd Rúd*,¹¹ is to be looked for to the west of the Caspian. It is true that in another passage Gushtásp is represented as praying by Lake *Frazdánava* for victory over Arjásp and other foes,¹² and that in the Pahlaví Texts this lake is described as being in *Sagastán* (*Sistán*),¹³ but the tendency at present seems to be in favour of identifying it with the Armenian river *Hrazdán*,¹⁴ which will bring it into line with the other passages It is only natural that the Chionitæ should leave their traces in Persian tradition, as they came on the scene at the epoch when the *Zandavasta* was being compiled.¹⁵ They are not mentioned by name in the *Sháhnáma*, but in *Dakíkí's* portion a peculiar word, "*Paighú*," not found elsewhere in the poem, or at all events not in the texts used in the present translation, is occasionally employed with reference to the northern enemy.

Zarduhsht or *Zardusht*, as the name is varyingly spelt in the *Sháhnáma*, but more familiarly known to western readers as *Zoroaster*, naturally dominates the *Zandavasta*, of which he is the traditional author. His name therein appears as *Zarathushtra*, and many scholars have exercised their ingenuity as to its meaning. Perhaps the best interpretation divides the word into "*zar*," and

¹ DZA, ii. 80.² *E.g.*, *id.* 114.³ *Id.* 117.⁴ BGDF, iii. 493.⁵ Bk. xvi. c. 9, xviii. 6 *seq*⁶ See p. 24.⁷ See Vol. i. pp. 16 *seq.*, 71, ii. p. 336, iv. p. 136.⁸ Bk. xvii. c. 5.⁹ DZA, ii. 117, 280.¹⁰ *Id.* i. 4, *note*.¹¹ JZ, 197 and *note*.¹² DZA, ii. 79.¹³ WPT, i. 86.¹⁴ JZ, 211 and *note*, 220, 221.¹⁵ See Vol. i. p. 63.

"ushtra." The reader may be reminded, that Sám, on recovering his outcast son, gave him the name of Zál-i-zar or Zál the old.¹ "Ushtra" is the ancient form of the modern "ushtar," camel. Zarathushtra therefore seems to mean "Old Camel," or "He whose camels are old." For reasons sufficiently weighty at the time when the Sháhname was written, the account given of him in that poem is of the briefest, and it is proposed therefore to amplify it from other traditional sources. According to these he was born in B.C. 660—the year of the accession of Sháh Gushtásp.² His father's name was Pourushaspa,³ his mother's Dughdhóví.⁴ His father's home seems to have been situated in a valley⁵ on the upper bank of the river Dareja,⁶ best identified with the modern Daryai Rúd, also known as the Kara su, or "Blackwater," which flows from Mount Savalán, northward to the Aras.⁷ His mother, Dughdhóví, seems to have been a native of the city or district of Rai, near Tíhrán.⁸ Being the highly favoured among women as the destined mother of the Prophet, the divine Glory rested on her in a visible form from her birth. The demons, instinctively aware that it would not be to their interests to ignore this portent, smote the district where she lived with three plagues—excessive cold, pestilence, and oppressive enemies—and then suggested to the inhabitants that the girl was a witch, and therefore the cause of the trouble. Pourushaspa did his best to defend his daughter, affirming that such a radiance as proceeded from her was too brilliant to be accounted for on the score of witchcraft, but, owing to the pertinacity of the demons, the interference of the Karap and Kavíg of the district, and the secret purpose of Providence to confound the wicked by their own devices, the girl was sent away to the house of her future father-in-law, thus directly bringing about the very result that the demons were most anxious to avoid.⁹ The Karaps and Kavígs, so called in the Pahlaví Texts, appear in the Zandavasta as Karpans and Kavis. The Karaps seem to have been the orthodox witch-doctors, or medicine-men, of a time when the separation, still incomplete, of the crafts of the priest, the leech, and the witch, not even had begun, and naturally they are held up to execration by the later orthodox Zoroastrian clergy. The Kavígs, equally reprobated, perhaps represented the lay official element.¹⁰ The village to which the maligned maiden was exiled was the home of a family or clan called, from their eponymous ancestor, "Spítámas." Zarduhsht thus became known to future times as Zarathushtra

¹ Vol. i. p. 248.² WPT, v., xxix.³ DZA, i. 211.⁴ WPT, iii. 302.⁵ *Id.* v. 21.⁶ DZA, i. 211.⁷ *Id.* xlix., 1st. ed. JZ, 194.⁸ *Id.* 192.⁹ WPT, v. 18 *seq.*¹⁰ *Id.* 19, *note.*

Spítáma Urmuzd, it should be stated, had begun, in consultation with the ameshaspentas, to make arrangements for his birth 5970 years before it occurred.¹ The procedure involved being somewhat complex,² it will suffice to say that the maiden Dughdhóvá was in due course espoused to Pourushaspa,³ that for three days before the Prophet came into the world the village was all luminous with the divine Glory to the great terror of the inhabitants,⁴ and that the babe was born laughing, to the discomfiture of the seven midwives that were in attendance.⁵ Dughdhóvá was fifteen years old when her son was born, and from that moment the divine Glory, which had encompassed her from her birth, passed to him.⁶ The situation seems to have been altogether too much for Pourushaspa, who appears to have felt and acted just as Sám did on the occasion of the birth of Zál.⁷ Especially, he was perturbed at the laughter of the babe at birth, and was only too eager to be rid of his uncanny offspring. Accordingly, he called in the most famous medicine-man of the district, by name Dúrásróbó, who at once attempted to lay violent hands upon the babe, but they became so twisted that he never could feed himself again.⁸ He, however, so wrought upon the father that the latter tried several times to put the child to death. He made a pyre of wood and laid Zarduhsht thereon; placed him on a narrow path and drove cattle along it; set him beside a pool and brought horses to water there; but all his endeavours proved fruitless. The fire would not burn the babe, while the foremost ox and horse stood over him till the rest of the herds had passed. The child was then left in the den of a wolf, whose cubs just before had been slaughtered, but on each occasion the babe was recovered unhurt by the devoted mother, who indignantly informed her spouse that he was worse than the wolf!⁹ Dúrásróbó then brought upon the scene a malignant disciple of his own named Brádrók-résh, a sort of Balaam, who, though willing to injure Zarduhsht, yet was impelled to proclaim his future greatness. These two and the father still colloqued, but all their plans were frustrated and their arguments refuted by the growing child. At length Dúrásróbó came to a bad end,¹⁰ but Brádrók-résh lived to be the slayer of the Prophet.¹¹ Zarduhsht had four brothers, two elder, of course by another wife of his father's, and two younger.¹² When he was fifteen years old, he and his brothers asked their father to bestow portions upon them, and he did so. Part of what was divided consisted of

¹ WPT, v., xxviii.² *Id.* 17, 18, 21; JZ, 24.³ WPT, v. 25.⁴ *Id.* 30.⁵ *Id.* 35.⁶ JZ, 24.⁷ See Vol. i. p. 239 *seq.*⁸ WPT, v. 36.⁹ *Id.* 36 *seq.*¹⁰ *Id.* 40 *seq.*¹¹ *Id.* 126.¹² *Id.* 144.

raiment, and from this Zarduhsht selected and assumed the girdle—a symbolical act like that of the assumption of the sacred cord by the twice-born in India. At the age of twenty he left his parents' house without their permission, and began the years of preparation that was to end in divine illumination later on. Of this period little is recorded except that he went about doing good, helping the weak and aged, and in times of scarcity giving his father's fodder to feed other men's cattle, which were so hungry that, as the original record puts it, they constantly ate off each other's tails¹. He is said also to have abandoned worldly desires, but this did not prevent his marrying, partly, as it would seem, to please his parents. He showed, however, his good sense by asking to see the face of the proposed bride before espousing her. Also he attended the assembly of the wise, and asked them questions². On the day Dai pa Mihr of the month Ardibihusht, or, in our prosaic modern equivalent, on May 5th, B.C. 630, when he was thirty years old, the Revelation came to him. The ameshaspenta Vohu Manau (Vohúman, Bahman)³ met him in the neighbourhood, probably, of the Safid Rûd, or White River, in Ázarbáiján,⁴ and bore him to the presence of Urmuzd and to the other five ameshaspentas. When Zarduhsht arrived within twenty-four feet of them, he ceased to see his own shadow on the ground owing to the universally diffused radiance that proceeded from them. In the conference with Urmuzd that ensued, Zarduhsht was informed that the three perfections of the embodied world were good thoughts, good words, and good deeds; that to recognise the ameshaspentas as such, *i.e.* as immortal benefactors, was good; that to behold them was better, and that to obey them was best of all. He was instructed also in the doctrine of Dualism. The vision occurred thrice on that day, and Zarduhsht underwent three ordeals—walking on fire, having molten metal poured on his chest and holding it in his hand, and being wounded with a knife and healed by the passing of hands over the place, so that in time to come the faithful also might be enabled to endure the like for the glory of the good religion.⁵ Inspired by this revelation, Zarduhsht began his missionary labours,

¹ Cf., "the animals were so hungry that they bit one another's tails. . . . One horse had actually not a hair left on his tail." Sven Hedin, *Trans-Himalaya*, p. 160.

² WPT, v. 151 *seq.*

³ See Vol. iii. p. 271.

⁴ JZ, 41, 197.

⁵ WPT, v. 154 *seq.* In the reign of Shápúr, son of Urmuzd (Sapor II. A.D. 309–379), the saintly Ádarbád, son of Mahraspand, underwent the ordeal of having molten metal poured upon his breast and came out of it triumphant. DZA, i., xlvi.; WPT, iii 171, and *note*.

attempting in the first instance to convert the assembled Kavígs and Karaps. He appealed to them to accept the religion of Urmuzd, to forego demon-worship, and to adopt the principle of next of kin marriages. With regard to this last article, it is difficult to rise superior to inherited taboos and not feel a certain sympathy with Zarduhsht's hearers when we read that at this point they rushed upon him and strove to put him to death.¹ We may, however, acquit Zarduhsht, or at least the Zarathushtra of the Gáthas, of ever having advocated such a doctrine, first on the general principle that it never would have occurred to one who not yet had made a single disciple, it being a device far more suitable to a Faith *in extremis*, and secondly, because it is not advocated in the Gáthas themselves. Next of kin marriages, of course, occurred in ancient times between exalted, almost divine, personages regarded as being above the customary taboos, but such marriages were not peculiar to Zoroastrians.² Other attempts of Zarduhsht to spread his evangel are recorded, in the course of which he is said to have journeyed as far east as Sístán,³ but all proved fruitless. It was not till ten years after his receipt of the Revelation that he made his first convert—his cousin Maudhyó-mzungha, the son of Árásti, who was Pourushaspa's brother.⁴ During these ten years Zarduhsht appears to have returned from time to time to his own home, apparently for the winter months, and to have received at such seasons a series of further Revelations from each of the six ameshaspentas in turn.⁵ Time, however, was slipping by; ten years had passed, only one convert had been made, and in despair the Prophet again appealed to Urmuzd, received the complete Revelation, the sacred formula wherewith to smite the fiends—the formula known as the Ahuna Vairya, beginning, "The will of the Lord is the law of righteousness,"—and was warned that he would be assailed by the demons.⁶ The warning was needed. He was attacked at the moment of his greatest spiritual exaltation. The demon Búiti made the first assault, but was repulsed. Next came the evil counterpart of the ameshaspenta Vohu Manau—Akem Manau ("Bad thought")⁷—with his malignant riddles; but Zarduhsht pelted him with stones. Lastly, Áhriman came on the scene in person. All that was required of the Prophet was that he should worship as his mother worshipped—a very subtle form of temptation. Let him but renounce the good religion, and the sovereignty of the whole world should be his; but Zarduhsht refused, chanted the Ahuna Vairya, and foiled the tempter.⁸ Another trial, against which

¹ WPT, v. 50.² See on the whole subject WPT, ii. 389.³ *Id.* v. 57.⁴ *Id.* v. 163; DZA, ii. 203.⁵ WPT, v. 159 *seq.*⁶ JZ, 51.⁷ Cf. Vol. iii. p. 271.⁸ DZA, i. 209 *seq.*

Urmuzd had warned him, was still to come. One of the medicine-men of the old religion assumed the form of the female ameshaspenta Sapandármad, and accosted him. Now Zarduhsht had had opportunities of seeing the true Sapandármad, and knew that she was in all respects well formed and lovely while her impersonator would be fair in front but hideous behind. He therefore bade the temptress turn herself round. After protesting vainly, she did so; her falsity became evident, and the phantasm was annihilated.¹ Inspired by Urmuzd, Zarduhsht now determined on a bold step—that of attempting to convert Sháh Gushtásp to the Faith. The “terrible conflict,” as tradition calls it, that ensued lasted two years,² for the Evangelist was opposed desperately by the medicine-men whom he found in possession at that monarch’s court.³ We may lay the scene at Balkh. The first interview between Zarduhsht and Gushtásp seems to have taken place on the riding-ground. At first, as the expression “terrible conflict” implies, the Prophet came off badly. The king, it is true, was inclined to give ear to him, but his opponents, fearful lest he should prevail with Gushtásp, induced the latter to imprison him and leave him to starve to death.⁴ At this moment, however, Providence intervened with regard to a transaction, the account of which exists only in fragments and allusions in the older authorities. Here, therefore, we have to turn for a consecutive narrative to the Zartusht-náma, a poetical version of the life of the Prophet, written by one of the faithful, Zartusht Bahrám Pazhdú by name, apparently at Rai, near Tíhrán, and finished on August 12th, A.D. 1278.⁵ We learn from this that Zarduhsht’s opponents, worsted by him in argument at a three days’ conference held before the king, concealed abominations in his house and then accused him of sorcery. Gushtásp ordered search to be made, the incriminating articles were found, and Zarduhsht was cast into prison. Now, while he was languishing there, a mysterious and unprecedented event occurred. The legs of the king’s favourite black horse were drawn up into the animal’s body, and king, court, and people were all in consternation. Zarduhsht heard of the matter through the keeper of the prison, and offered to heal the steed on four conditions. Gushtásp accepted them *seriatim*, and, as he did so, Zarduhsht drew forth from the body of the horse its four legs one by one. The conditions were, that Gushtásp should acknowledge

¹ WPT, v. 62.² *Id.* 73.³ *Id.* 64.⁴ *Id.* 64 *seq.*⁵ *Id.* xx. *seq.*, where a summary is given of the work, the whole of which, translated by Eastwick, is to be found in Wilson’s “Pársi Religion,” referred to as WPR.

Zarduhsht to be a true prophet ; that Asfandiyár should become the champion of the true religion , that Zarduhsht should have facilities for converting the queen ; and that his false accusers should be punished. It need hardly be added that with the restoration of the fourth leg the steed became as well as ever.¹ We learn from the same authority that Gushtásp, eager perhaps to avail himself to the utmost of such a unique opportunity, made in his turn four requests of Zarduhsht. These were, that the King's future doom should be revealed to him , that he should become invulnerable , that he should know both the past and the future, and that he should be undying till the Resurrection. Zarduhsht said that he would pray that these boons should be granted, but that the king must be content to ask only one of the four, whichever he preferred, for himself, and leave the other three for others. Gushtásp agreed to this, Zarduhsht withdrew to his own abode, and spent the night in prayer. The next morning a great marvel happened. Four heavenly messengers, two of them being ameshaspentas, sent by Urmuzd, arrived at court and exhorted Gushtásp to be firm in the Faith proclaimed to him by Zarduhsht, to cherish that Prophet, and to obey him in all things. The king swooned on his throne, but on his recovery promised full obedience to the divine injunctions, and the angelic band departed. Zarduhsht then prepared to perform the Darín. In the present day this is a ceremony held on behalf of some particular person, who is mentioned by name in the course of it, at the end of which the ceremonial wafer-bread—the Darín—is broken into pieces and partaken of first by the celebrant and the other priests present, and then by the rest of the congregation.² Zarduhsht, however, on the occasion of which we write, prepared four things—wine, perfumes, milk, and a pomegranate. Gushtásp drank of the wine and slept. In his sleep he had a vision of Paradise, and saw his own place therein—the boon that he had desired. Bishútan drank of the milk, and became immortal. Jámásp smelt of the perfumes, and immediately became possessed of all knowledge. Asfandiyár ate of the pomegranate, became invulnerable, and thus acquired the title of “the brazen-bodied”³ From this point, as easily may be imagined, the cause of the good religion began to prosper ; but the serious opposition known as “The War of the Religion” was still to come, and this we shall find set forth in the Sháhname itself⁴

¹ WPR, 499 *seq.*² HEP, 396, 407.³ WPR, 509 *seq.*⁴ The reader that desires farther information about the Prophet of Írán should consult Professor A. V. Williams Jackson's “Zoroaster,” referred to in the notes as JZ.

PART I

THE COMING OF ZARDUHSHT AND THE WAR WITH ARJÁSP

ARGUMENT

Firdausí describes how Dakíkí appeared to him in a dream, and begged that the thousand couplets which he (Dakíkí) had composed might be incorporated in the *Sháhnáma*. Firdausí accordingly gives Dakíkí's couplets. They deal with the advent of Zarduhsht (Zoroaster), the conversion of Gushtásp, the religious war with Túrán, which ensued, the defeat of Arjásp, king of Túrán, by Asfandiyár, Gushtásp's heroic son, the differences that arise between Asfandiyár and his father, the temporary disgrace and imprisonment of the former, and Arjásp's preparations for a fresh campaign. At the conclusion of Dakíkí's couplets, Firdausí proceeds to criticise them, and then takes up the thread of the story himself. Arjásp again invades Írán, storms Balkh, slays Luhrásp and Zarduhsht, and carries off Asfandiyár's sisters. Gushtásp is forced to appeal for assistance to Asfandiyár, who at first refuses, but finally assents, in order to avenge his brother Farshíward, who has been slain in battle by the Túránians, and on the understanding that his father will resign the throne in his favour. Arjásp is defeated, but Gushtásp refuses to carry out his part of the bargain till Asfandiyár has rescued his sisters from captivity.

NOTE

§§ 1-26. This passage, with the exception of the preface in § 1 and the postscript in § 26, which were written by Firdausí and will be referred to later, is by another poet—Dakíkí—of whose life, as Professor Noldeke says,¹ we know very little, and nothing with certainty. The name Dakíkí, like Firdausí, is a mere *nom de plume*.

¹ NIN. § 16.

He appears, however, to have flourished during the reign of the Sámánid ruler, Mansur I (A.D. 961-976), to whom and to his successor, Nuh II. (A.D. 976-997), he wrote eulogies still extant.¹ Doubtlessly he was a Persian by birth, and, if we can trust his own statement, a Zoroastrian as well.² He had a considerable reputation, not undeserved, as a poet in his own day,³ and died, murdered by one of his own slaves, early, it would appear,⁴ in the reign of Nuh II. The similarity of the work of Dakíkí and Firdausí is remarkable. They use the same metre and pretty much the same vocabulary, have a similar style, and affect the same figures of speech. In fact, it might be maintained that in most of the above respects Firdausí carefully copied his predecessor; but the better opinion seems to be that the features above mentioned were the common property of the poets of the time, and would be used by them as a matter of course when dealing with similar subject-matter. Still it is possible to detect differences and discrepancies in the work of the two poets. With regard to the former, for instance, Professor Nuldeke points out that the presentation is more formal in Dakíkí's hands. When a new hero enters, and when he falls, the account is given in the same manner, almost in the same words, and is not varied as Firdausí knew how to vary such things; and further, that the treatment of the subject-matter is less adroit, Gushtásp, for instance, being represented as twice on the point of joining in the fray and each time easily dissuaded from so doing.⁵ Again, Dakíkí uses certain words⁶ that apparently, though this is stated with all reserve, Firdausí does not. With regard to the discrepancies, an attentive reader even of the present translation might note some. For instance, when, in the reign of Kai Khusrau, we heard last of the political relations between Írín and Túrán, the latter, left kingless by the destruction of Afrásiyúb and all his house, was represented as being in a state of complete subjection to the former. Then comes the reign of Luhrásp, in which we hear nothing on the subject, after which, at the beginning of that of Gushtásp, an entirely new political situation is sprung upon us.⁷ Írín is represented

¹ They may be found translated, with others of Dakíkí's short poems, in BLHP, i. 461.

² *Id.* 459. See too Vol. i. p. 69.

³ BLHP, i. 460, ii. 127.

⁴ See Vol. i. p. 28.

⁵ NIN, § 17. See pp. 64, 68.

⁶ *E.g.* "Paighá" = Turkman, and "tigín" = brave.

⁷ Can it be that a legend now lost dealt with the fortunes of some viceroy, appointed by Kai Khusrau to administer Túrán, and the descendants of such viceroy? He or they in the days of Luhrásp may have obtained the predominance and been handed down by tradition

as tributary to Túrán, and the latter is under the rule of a powerful king. This was all right from Dakíki's point of view, because he started on that assumption, but it is hard to believe that Firdausí, looking before and after as he must have done, would have rendered no explanation of, or made no reference to, the new state of affairs if he had been the author of this part of the poem. Again, in Dakíki, who doubtlessly follows his authorities, Asfandiyár marries his sister Humái. Firdausí ignores this, and deliberately prefers to make a fine scene of his own less convincing in consequence. Gushtásp, having imprisoned Asfandiyár owing to the charge made against him by the envious Gurazm, is defeated and hardly pressed by Arjásp. He sends Jámásp to persuade Asfandiyár to forget his ill-treatment and furnish much needed help. Jámásp urges various pleas, and among them the captivity among the Turkmans of Asfandiyár's sisters—Humái and Bih Áfríd—but the resentful captive remains obdurate till Jámásp falls back upon the case of Farshídwár, who is represented as being the only member of Asfandiyár's family that felt concern for him in his disgrace. The plea of the captivity of Humái—his wife as well as sister—was ready at hand to be put into Jámásp's mouth had Firdausí so desired, but he refrained, and in this portion of the *Sháhnáma* represented the brother and sister as being wholly indifferent to each other. Again, the formal introduction of Rustam,¹ after all that has gone before, might strike the reader as somewhat curious.

If the fact of Dakíki's authorship had been unknown, it is not impossible that some critic might have based a theory of difference of authorship on some such considerations as those mentioned above; but it would have been sufficient to reply that Firdausí's own style is not uniform throughout the *Sháhnáma*,² and that the passage in question reads like a first draft, which, owing to some accident or oversight, had been left unrevised. This is precisely what it is, and for the best of reasons in Dakíki's case, inasmuch as

"death approaching unexpectedly
Imposed its gloomy helmet on his head,"

as Firdausí put it on another occasion.³ Lack of opportunity for revision, too, is the best answer to Firdausí's somewhat severe criticisms of his predecessor's work.⁴ Why, then, did he insert it?

as "Arjásp." This would account for the Iránian character of that word, and explain and justify the outbreak of the War of the Religion.

¹ See p. 85.

² Cf. Vol. iii. p. 285.

³ *Id.* i. 109.

⁴ See p. 87.

Several reasons may be given. First, by so doing he paid off his debt —

“He was my pioneer, and he alone”¹

Secondly, it got Firdausí himself out of a difficulty. The epoch of the advent of Zarduhsht was a dangerous one to treat in those days of fanaticism. The dead poet was beyond the reach of offended Muhammadan orthodoxy, so his work, the insertion of which was justified on the plea of a dream—a portent not lightly to be disregarded in those days—was substituted for what the living poet would have had to write or leave a serious omission in the poem. Thirdly, Firdausí's real opinion of Dakíkí's literary ability was in all probability higher than he thought it politic to accentuate in close proximity to such a dangerous topic. When he wrote the Prelude to the *Sháhnámá* he expressed himself much more favourably. Fourthly, Dakíkí's alleged inferiority might serve as a foil. If his feeble strain won him honour and emolument from the groat, whose praises he sang, how much more should the fluent and refined work of his successor gain substantial recognition.² Lastly, the ostensible reason after all may have been the real one. To have a vivid dream is not uncommon; to act upon it is rarer no doubt; but instances have been known, and Firdausí's case may be one in point; at all events, he says so. Like other great poets he was, we may assume, highly strung; and Dakíkí's death, its tragic suddenness, and the vista that it opened, cannot fail to have impressed him. Be this as it may, he adopted Dakíkí's literary orphan, but, having provided permanently for it, did not allow it to interfere further with his own poetical progeny. Without disparaging Dakíkí, we may congratulate ourselves, on the whole, upon the course that events took. Whatever he may have been, he was not a Firdausí. Apart altogether from the literary side of the question, there must have been a regularity of life, a steadfastness of purpose, and a moral elevation in the latter's case which seem to have been only too lacking in the former's. Had Dakíkí's life been prolonged for a season, he might, unintentionally of course, have played the part of the dog in the manger, obstructing Firdausí without having the needful qualities or opportunities for the accomplishment of a task of such magnitude himself. The two poets, however, *par nobile fratrum* as they were in genius and in enthusiasm, had one other excellent point in common. They followed their authorities in all essential particulars, and did not

¹ p. 88.

² *Id.*

invent on their own account. So far as Dakíkí is concerned, this will be shown in what follows.

The Sháhnáma may be described as a great river—the outcome of many tributaries. The greatest of these undoubtedly is the prose compilation of ancient legend known as the Bástán-náma, or Khudai-náma, of which some account has been given already.¹ This in its turn had its affluents, some of which we may conceive of as passing into it in their primitive form while others entered it in an already mingled stream. Some affluents again wholly merged and thus lost their independent existence entirely, while others only partially did so and thus preserved their own identity. Of these latter again one at least passed out of sight for a time only to reappear in a somewhat altered but still recognisable form later on. In the interval, however, between its disappearance and reappearance, it is evident that its contents became tinged with that of other sources. The result, as we now possess it, is a little Pahlaví Text known as the Yátkár-i-Zarírán. This gives us a very good notion of what the original affluent must have contained, and as it deals with the same matters as are dealt with by Dakíkí in §§ 2–19, we are in a position to check his work. It should be understood clearly that the Yátkár-i-Zarírán was not the actual authority followed by him, but stands collaterally related to the version of the original affluent which, mingled with the Bástán-náma, passed, after further vicissitudes and centuries later, into his hands. The following is a summary of the main points of resemblance and difference between the Yátkár-i-Zarírán and Dakíkí, the former being referred to as Z and the latter as D. First, for the resemblance. Most of the names appear in both, the only difference being that in Z we have some of them in the Pahlaví, and in D all of them in the modern Persian, form. Thus in Z we have Vishtásp and in D Gushtásp, in Z Spand-dát and in D Asfandiyár, in Z Garámik-kart and in D Girámí. In both, Arjásp hears that Gushtásp has adopted the Faith of Zarduhsht, and sends envoys to bid him recant or take the consequences. The envoys' names are Vidrafsh and Nám-khást, son of Hazár, in Z; Bidrafsh and Námkhást, son of Hazárán, in D. In both, Zarír, the captain of the Íránian host, obtains Gushtásp's permission to answer Arjásp's letter, and does so, accepting the arbitrament of war; the envoys return to Arjásp, and the monarchs prepare for battle. In both, Gushtásp calls upon Jámásp, his chief minister, to foretell the issue of the coming fight; under protest Jámásp does so, and the king is so perturbed that he

¹ Vol. 1. p. 66 *seq.*

announces his intention of not allowing his nearest and dearest to go upon the battlefield; but when Jámásp points out the ills which in that event will befall Írán, he resigns himself to the inevitable. In both, Arjásp and Gushtásp take up their posts of survey, and the fight begins; Zarír displays great valour; Arjásp in alarm offers his daughter's hand and high office to any one who will fight Zarír; Bídírafsh volunteers, and kills Zarír from behind. In both, Gushtásp on the hill-top forebodes the death of Zarír, and offers his daughter Humái in marriage to any one that will avenge him; Zarír's son (Bastvar in Z, Nastúr in D)¹ obtains a steed from the master of the horse, goes forth to the battlefield, finds his father lying dead, laments over him, fights and returns to Gushtásp, who equips and sends him forth again. In both, he fights so bravely that Arjásp compares him to Zarír, dispatches Bídírafsh to encounter him, and Bídírafsh is slain. In both, Asfandiyár and Nastúr totally defeat the enemy, and Arjásp gets back to his own realm.

In addition to these general points of resemblance, there are others in matters of detail, as where, both in Z and D, Girámí is represented as fighting while holding the royal standard between his teeth, but these need not detain us. It remains to point out the difference. In Z Arjásp is the ruler of the Khyóns;² in D of the Turkmans and of Chín. In D the war begins with Gushtásp's refusal, prompted by Zarduhsht, to continue the payment of tribute to Arjásp. This is not in Z. Except for the mention of the death of Zarír, and the defeat of Arjásp by Asfandiyár, Jámásp's prophecy differs in Z and D. In Z Zarír begins the battle; in D there is fighting for two weeks, during which several of Gushtásp's sons distinguish themselves, and are slain, before Zarír takes the field. In D Asfandiyár hears of Zarír's death. He also hears his father swearing to surrender the crown to him if the Turkmans are defeated—an important addition, and the keynote of the whole reign. In D it is Asfandiyár, and not Nastúr, that kills Bídírafsh. In Z all the Khyóns are slain with the exception of Arjásp himself, whom Spand-dit takes prisoner, mutilates, and sends back on a docked ass to Túrán. In D Asfandiyár makes a great slaughter, puts Arjásp to flight, and gives quarter to the rest of the Turkman host. In general, we may say, Z is on a much smaller scale than D, by whom letters, speeches, and descriptions of battles are given at much greater length. The differences in matters of detail also are important and suggestive. For instance, in Z Jámásp, after

¹ Cf. p. 12.

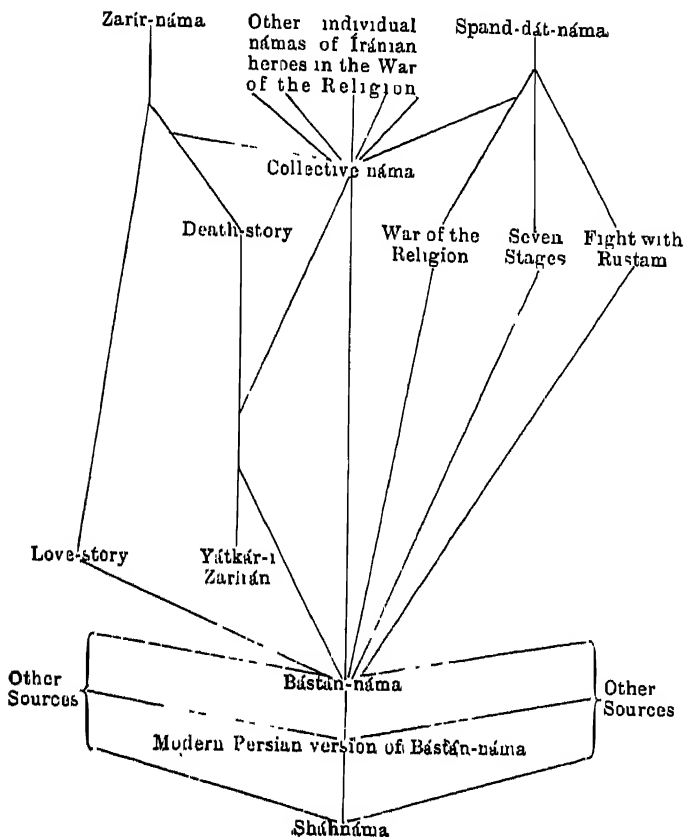
² See p. 13.

propheying that Zarír will be killed by Vídrafsh, adds that Nám-khást will slay Pát-khusrau, another brother, and Frashókart, a son, of Gushtásp's, and further, that twenty-two of his other sons and brothers will perish. In the account of the actual fighting, however, only the death of Zarír is recorded. In D, though all reference to Pát-khusrau and Frashókart is omitted, Jámásp's prophecy is considerably expanded. He tells of the prowess and death of three of Gushtásp's sons—Ardshír, Shídas, and Nivzár—and of his own son Girámi, who does not die in Z, as well as of the success of Zarír's son Nastúr, before dealing with Zarír himself. All these heroes are mentioned again in the description of the fight, and mostly at greater length than in the prophecy, while the exploits of another of Gushtásp's sons—Shirí—are commemorated between those of Ardshír and Shídas. It seems, therefore, that fragments of another legend, and those not the same fragments, must have found their way by different routes both into Z and D. That legend must have been one commemorating collectively and in detail the prowess of the Írúman heroes, especially those of the royal house, in the War of the Religion. This is the more likely because in the circumstances they would be regarded as martyrs and confessors of the Faith. In addition to a collective commemoration, some of the more important of these heroes must have had their own separate *náma* or legend. Even if Z were not extant, we should be justified in assuming the existence of such a *náma* in Zarír's case, and this must have had at least two branches—a Love-story and a Death-story. The account given of him in the *Sháhnáma*, and elsewhere under the name of Zarnadres,¹ is sufficient to show this. In later times he became overshadowed partly by Gushtásp and partly by Asfandiyár. The Love-story from which he was ousted by Gushtásp will be found in the reign of Luhrásp.² As regards the Death-story, even in Z we find Spand-dát already dominant, and in D he is still more so. He and Jámásp are associated with Zarír in the reply to Arjášp's letter, the promise of bestowing the kingship upon him is made by Gushtásp, and it is he, and not Nastúr, who avenges Zarír. To account for this predominance, therefore, we must assume still another source—an Asfandiyár-*náma*, or, as it would be called in Pahlaví, a Spand-dát-*náma*—with at least three branches, all represented in their latest forms in the *Sháhnáma*. To sum up and illustrate what has been said above, a diagram is appended,

¹ See Vol. iv. p. 314.

² *Id.* and 329 *seq.*

which, however, in view of the ravages wrought by time, must be regarded as somewhat theoretical.¹



§ 3. For Zardušt (Zoroaster) see p 13 *seq.* Whether the planting of a cypress at Kishmar by him was an actual fact, or whether it is an instance of a people being misled by one of their own metaphors, it is impossible to say. To plant a tree to commemorate some important event is not unusual. Metaphorically to plant a tree, in the sense of instituting some new custom or

¹ See on the Yátkár-i-Zarirán generally, GYZ, without the help of which the latter portion of this note could not have been written.

making a new departure in policy, *etc.*, is common enough in the Sháhnáma. We have an instance at the beginning of this section. At all events, the Cypress of Kishmar rivals Gushtásp's Black Horse¹ in fame, and, after living for some fourteen centuries and a half, is said to have been cut down by the orders of the Khalífa Mutawakkal (A.D. 846-860). The following is the account of it given in the Dabistán.—“The professors of the excellent faith and the Moslem historians agree, that in . . . Kashmar . . . a dependency of Naishapur, there was formerly a cypress planted by Zardusht for king Gushtasp, the like of which was never seen before or since, for beauty, height, or straightness: mention of this tree having been made at the court of Mutawakkal when he was engaged in building the *Sarman rav*, or *Sumarah* palace in the Jáafriyah, the Khalif felt a great desire to behold it: and as it was not in his power to go to Khorasan, he wrote to *Abdalláh Táhr Zavahmín*, ‘possessor of happiness,’ to have the tree cut down, fastened on rollers, and sent to Baghdad. When intelligence of this came to the people of the district and the inhabitants of Khorasan, they assembled at the foot of the tree, imploring for mercy with tears and lamentations, and exhibiting a scene of general desolation. The professors of the excellent faith offered the governor fifty thousand dinars to spare the tree, but the offer was refused. When the cypress was felled, it caused great detriment to the buildings and water-courses of the country; the birds of different kinds which had built their nests on it issued forth in such countless myriads as to darken the air, screaming out in agony with various tones of distress: the very oxen, sheep, and other animals which reposed under its sheltering shade, commenced such piteous moans of woe that it was impossible to listen to them. The expense of conveying the trunk to Baghdad was five hundred thousand dinars; the very branches loaded one thousand and three hundred camels. When the tree had reached one station from the Jáafriah quarter, on that same night, Mutawakkal the Abasside was cut in pieces by his own guards, so that he never beheld the tree.”² According to other accounts, Zardusht brought down two cypress-shoots from Paradise, one of which he planted at Kishmar and the other in the neighbourhood of Tús.³ The statement in the text that Gushtásp raised over the Cypress of Kishmar a lofty palace has been interpreted to mean that he built himself a summer-house among its boughs, or rather that Zardusht built it for him: “in hujus Arboris summitate erexit Aestivarium.”⁴ In villages in

¹ See p. 18. ² STD, i. 306 *seq.* ³ HRVP, p. 332. ⁴ *Id.* 324.

Persia at the present day a semi-sacred character is attached to some of the large trees, which have platforms built round them where the villagers sit and smoke in the evenings.¹

§ 8. The Kuhram mentioned here and in § 11 is no doubt the same person, though variously described as the brother and son of Arjásþ Firdausí makes him the latter. A Kuhram and an Andarímán appear among the Túránian heroes as far back as the reign of Kai Káús,² and are among those slain in "The Battle of the Twelve Rukhs."³ Probably the same legendary characters are intended throughout. Death is no bar to the reappearance of a hero in the *Sháhnáma*.⁴

§§ 11-19, 27-32. The War of the Religion between Gushtásp and Arjásþ is divided into two campaigns, separated by a considerable interval, during part of which Asfandiyár was a prisoner in the stronghold of Gumbadán. In the first campaign the fighting consisted of a series of engagements extending over two weeks, and in the end the Íránians were completely victorious, but we have no very definite information as to where it took place. In the Yútkár-i-Zarírún the Íránian reply to Arjásþ's ultimatum proposes the neighbourhood of Marv as the meeting-ground, "where there is no high mountain, nor any deep ravine, but where on the plateau of the steppe horses and the valiant men-at-arms can move freely."⁵ The *Sháhnáma*, in partial accord to this, makes Gushtásp advance to the Jíhún (Oxus),⁶ but we do not hear of the river being crossed by either host. In the second campaign Arjásþ, taking advantage of Gushtásp's absence in Sístán, suddenly invaded Írán. Several distinct battles were fought. In the first, outside the walls of Balkh, Luhrásp, the ex-Sháh, was defeated and slain, and the city stormed. In the second, Gushtásp was defeated and beleaguered on a mountain, and in the third he was rescued from his dangerous position by Asfandiyár. It would seem from the *Sháhnáma*⁷ that the second and third battles were, like the first, fought in the neighbourhood of Balkh, but other tradition points to a different locality. According to this view, we must imagine the opposing hosts encountering in the region about Nishápúr, Arjásþ advancing westward from Balkh and Gushtásp northward from Sístán. The scene of the conflict therefore would lie about and between the Binalúd and Jagatai ranges, some part of which was known in old times as "the Ridge of Gushtásp"; and there is a tradition that when the Íránians were hard pressed they were helped by a land-slip from one of the

¹ WLS, p. 364.

² Vol. ii. pp. 264, 349.

³ *Id.* iv. 104, 105.

⁴ *Id.* ii. 119.

⁵ GYZ, p. 50.

⁶ p. 48.

⁷ See p. 94.

adjacent mountains which received in consequence the name of "Madófrýát" or "Come-to-help."¹

§ 21. The Gloom, or Land of Darkness, here referred to, will be met with again in the next volume under the reign of Sikandar (Alexander the Great), who entered it in quest of the Water of Life

§ 24. The stronghold of Gumbadán, in which Asfandiyár was imprisoned, appears to have been situated on a mountain which became known in consequence as Mount Spentó-dáta in the Zandavasta² and as Mount Spendyád in the Pahlavi Texts³ It seems, moreover, to be identical with Mount Sipand—the scene of one of Rustam's youthful exploits⁴—and with Mount Sapad which comes into prominence in the story of Farúd.⁵ Mount Spentó-dáta has been located in the neighbourhood of the Bár Mountains to the north-west of Nishápúr⁶ This is, of course, inconsistent with Malcolm's identification of the stronghold on Mount Sipand with the "White Castle," of which he gives a description already quoted.⁷ According to Mirkhond Asfandiyár was confined in the fortress of Girdkuh in the district of Rúdbár.⁸ This was situated in the neighbourhood of Kaswín, and in later times was one of the strongholds of 'Umar Khayyám's contemporary and fellow-student, Hasan Sabbáh, better known as "The Old Man of the Mountain," to whom we are indebted for the vogue of the word "assassin."

§ 1

How Firdausí saw Dakíkí in a Dream

V. 1495 Thus was it that one night the poet dreamed :—
He held a cup of wine whose fragrance seemed
Rosewater-like. Dakíkí from his stead
Appeared and, speaking of that wine-cup, said
Thus to Firdausí : "Quaff not save thou choose
The fashion of the days of Kai Káuś,
For he that is the monarch of thy choice,
In whom crown, throne, and fortune all rejoice,
Mahmúd, the king of kings and conqueror,

¹ JZ, p. 216.

² DZA, II. 289.

³ WPT, I. pp. 34, 39.

⁴ Vol. I. p. 330.

⁵ *Id.* III. pp. 52, 54, 58, etc.; NIN, § 30, and note ⁶ JZ, p. 215.

⁷ Vol. I. p. 236.

⁸ SM, p. 290 and note.

Who giveth all a portion of his store,
 Shall from today for fourscore years and five
 Behold his travail wane, his treasury thrive,
 Shall lead to Chín hereafter his array,
 And every chief shall ope for him the way.
 He will not need to speak an angry word,
 All crowns will come to him with one accord.
 If o'er this story thou hast somewhat striven
 Now all that thou didst wish to thee is given.
 I too told somewhat of this history,
 And if thou findest it be kind to me.
 I sang a thousand couplets of Gushtásp,
 Before my day was done, and of Arjásp,
 And if my work shall reach the king of kings
 My soul will soar o'er sublunary things."

V. 1496

So now the verses that he wrote I give,
 For he is gathered to the dust; I live

§ 2

*How Luhrásp went to Balkh and how Gushtásp sat
 upon the Throne*

Now when Luhrásp, descending from the throne
 Resigned it to Gushtásp, he made him ready
 To go to Naubahár in cherished Balkh,
 Because he had become God's votary,
 And men then held that fane in reverence,
 Just as the Arabs reverence Mecca now.
 He reached the fane, the Sháh, that man of God,
 Dismounted there, and there at last he died.
 He shut the portal of that glorious fane,
 And let no alien enter it, assumed
 The woollen raiment of a devotee—
 The garniture wherein to worship wisdom—
 Put off his armlets, let his hair grow long,

And set himself to serve the all-just Judge.
 Upstanding in His presence thirty years,
 Such is the way that men should serve the Lord,
 He offered supplication to the sun,
 According to the custom of Jamshíd.

Gushtásp, succeeding to his father's throne,
 His Grace, and fortune, donned his father's gift,
 The crown, fit ornament of noble men.

"I am," he said, "a Sháh that serveth God,
 And holy God hath given me this crown
 That I might keep the wolves apart the flock.

V. 1497 Toward God's way will we stretch forth our hands,
 And to the noble straiten not the world,
 But, as hath been the custom of the Sháhs,
 Convert ill-doers to the Faith of God."

He spread abroad his justice in such wise
 That wolf and sheep drank of the stream together.
 At length Náhíd, illustrious Cæsar's daughter,
 She whom the noble Sháh named Katáyún,
 Bare him two sons, each like the moon in splendour,
 One, famous, glorious Asfandiyár,
 A warlike prince and doughty cavalier,
 The other, Bishútan, the valiant swordsman,
 A famous prince, a shatterer of hosts.

The new Sháh, when acknowledged by the world,
 Was fain to be another Farídún.
 All other kings paid tribute, and the heart
 Of every hege was well disposed to him,
 Save King Arjásp, the ruler of Túrán,
 Who had the dívs for servants and admitted
 No claim for tribute, would not hear advice,
 And since he would not hear was doomed to chains.
 He took too tribute from the Sháh each year,
 But why should one pay tribute to his peer?

§ 3

*How Zarduhsht appeared and how Gushtásp accepted
his Evangel*

Thus passed a while, and then a Tree appeared
On earth within the palace of Gushtásp,
And grew up to the roof—a Tree whose roots
Spread far and wide, a Tree with many branches,
Its leafage precept and its fruitage wisdom :
How shall one die who eateth of such fruit ?
A Tree right fortunate and named Zarduhsht—
The slayer of malignant Áhriman.

Thus said he to the monarch of the world :—

“I am a prophet and thy guide to God.”

He brought a censer, filled with fire, and said :—

V. 1498

“This have I brought with me from Paradise.
The Maker of the world said : ‘Take thou this,
And look upon the heaven and the earth,
Because I made them not of dust and water :
Behold herein how I created them.
See now if any one could do this thing,
Save I that am the Ruler of the world ?
If thou acknowledgest My handiwork
Thou must acknowledge Me to be the Lord.’
Receive His good religion from the speaker,
And learn from him His usage and the way.
See that thou do as he directeth thee,
Choose wisdom, recognise this world as vile,
And learn the system of the good religion,
For kingship is not well when Faith is lacking.”

When that good Sháh had heard of that good Faith,
And had accepted it and its good customs,
His valiant brother, glorious Zarír,
Who used to vanquish mighty elephants ;
The Sháh, his father, now grown old at Balkh,

To whose heart worldly things were bitterness,
The mighty chiefs from all the provinces,
The wise physicians and the men of war,
All gathered to the monarch of the earth,
Assumed the cincture and received the Faith.
Then was the Grace of God made manifest,
For evil left the hearts of evil men,
The charnels were fulfilled with light divine,
And seeds were freed from all impurity.
Then mounting to his throne high-born Gushtásp
Dispatched his troops throughout the provinces,
Distributed archmages through the world,
And set up Fanés of Fire. He first established
The Fire of Mihr Barzín; consider well
The system that the realm received from him.
Zarduhsht then planted him a noble cypress
Before the portal of the Fane of Fire,
And wrote upon that noble, straight-stemmed tree :—
“Gushtásp is convert to the good religion”;
Thus did he make the noble cypress witness
That wisdom was disseminating justice.
When in this manner many years had passed
The cypress-tree increased in height and girth,
Until that noble tree had grown so great
That e’en a lasso would not compass it.
When it had sent aloft full many a bough
Gushtásp raised over it a goodly palace,
Whereof the height and breadth were forty cubits;
He used no clay or water in the building.
When he had reared the palace of pure gold,
With silvern earth and dust of ambergris,
He painted there a picture of Jamshíd,
Engaged in worshipping the sun and moon,
Commanded too a picture to be drawn
Of Farídún armed with the ox-head mace,
And limned there all the potentates. Consider

If other ever had such puissance.
 When that famed hall of gold had grown thus goodly
 He had its walls inlaid with precious stones,
 And set an iron rampart round about.
 The king of earth made it his home. He sent
 This message through the realm: "In all the world
 What equalleth the cypress of Kishmar?
 God sent it down to me from Paradise,
 And said: 'Ascend to Paradise therefrom.'
 Now hearken, all of you, this rede of mine:
 Go to the cypress of Kishmar afoot,
 Adopt ye all the pathway of Zarduhsht,
 And, turning from the images of Chín,
 Gird round your loins the cineture in the Grace
 And greatness of the monarch of Írán.
 Heed not the usance of your predecessors,
 Trust in the shadow of this cypress-tree,
 And fix your gaze upon the Shrine of Fire,
 As bidden by the Prophet of the Truth."

V 1500

He spread abroad his words throughout the world
 Among the men of name and potentates,
 And at his bidding all that wore the crown
 Turned them toward the cypress of Kishmar;
 This holy shrine a paradise was found
 Wherein Zarduhsht the Dív in fetters bound.

§ 4

How Gushtásp refused to Arjásp the Tribute for Írán

Time passed. The monarch's star was blessed.

Zarduhsht,

The old, said to the ruler of the world:—

"'Tis not accordant to our Faith for thee

To pay a tribute to the prince of Chín,

Nor consonant with custom and religion.

Moreover I can not assent thereto,
 For no one of our Sháhs in days of yore
 Hath yielded tax and tribute to the Turkmans,
 Who all were impotent against Írán."

Gushtásp assented, saying: "I will order
 No tribute to be paid."

A valiant dív,

On hearing this, went to the king of Chín,
 And said to him: "O monarch of the world!
 Throughout it all the people great and small
 Agree in executing thy commands,
 And not one cometh forth against thy spearpoint
 Excepting Sháh Gushtásp, son of Luhrásp,
 Who leadeth out a host against the Turkmans,
 Hath made his hostile purpose clear, and wrought
 His devilry against a king like thee.
 More than a hundred thousand cavaliers
 Are mine, and I will bring them if thou wilt.
 Go to then, let us follow up his doings;
 See that thou fear not to contend with him."

v. 1501

Arjásp, when he had heard the dív speak thus,
 Descended from the royal Turkman throne,
 And, having summoned all the priests, announced
 What he had heard to them. "Know ye," said he,
 "That God's Grace and pure Faith have left Írán,
 Where some old dotard hath appeared who claimeth
 To be a prophet, and his words are these:—
 'I have come down from heaven, I have come down
 From Him who is the Master of the world.
 I have beheld the Lord in Paradise,
 And all the Zandavasta is His writing;
 I saw, moreover, Áhriman in Hell,
 But dared not venture near; the Lord then sent me
 To teach the monarch of the earth the Faith.'
 The chief among the nobles of Írán,
 The most illustrious son of Sháh Luhrásp,

He whom the Íránians call Gushtásp, hath bound
 The cincture round his loins, as hath withal
 His brother, that courageous cavalier,
 The general of Írán, Zarír by name.
 All gather to Zarduhsht to be instructed,
 And are befooled by that old sorcerer.
 All have with one consent embraced his Faith :
 His cult and ritual fulfil the world.
 By such fond methods and buffoonery
 Hath he become a prophet in Írán.
 Needs must I write a letter to that rebel,
 Give him great gifts, for gifts unasked are pleasant,
 And say to him : ' Abandon this ill course,
 Be awed before the God of Paradise,
 Put far from thee that ancient miscreant,
 And hold a feast according to our customs.'
 If then he will accept of our advice
 Our bonds will not prove galling to his feet ;
 If he reject it and revive old feuds
 We will assemble our disbanded troops,
 And, mustering a goodly host, invade
 Írán in consequence of these his doings,
 And, fearing not the pains and his resistance,
 Will bring him to contempt, before us drive,
 Put him in chains, and gibbet him alive."

V 1502

§ 5

How Arjásp wrote a Letter to Gushtásp

The warriors of Chín agreed thereto,
 And chose, moreover, from themselves two envoys,
 The one a mighty man hight Bídírafsh,¹
 Advanced in years, a warlock stout of heart,
 The other named Námkhást²—a sorcerer—

V. 1503

¹ i.e. Without a banner.

² i.e. Covetous of honour.

Whose thoughts were ever bent upon destruction.
 The monarch wrote a fair and goodly letter
 To that illustrious sovereign and convert :—
 “ First, I have written in the World-lord’s name,
 Who knoweth what is manifest and hidden,
 This royal letter, worthy of a king.
 To brave Gushtásp, the monarch of the earth,
 The worshipful and worthy of the state,
 The elect, the eldest son of Sháh Luhrásp,
 Lord of the world and warden of the throne,
 This from Arjásp, prince of the mighty men
 Of Chín, a world-subduing cavalier,
 And chosen hero.”

In that royal letter

He wrote fair greetings in the Turkman¹ script :—
 “ O famed son of the monarch of the world,
 Who brightenest the throne of king of kings !
 Fresh be thy head, thy soul and body hale,
 Thy royal loins tight-girded. I have heard
 That thou hast taken to disastrous courses,
 And turned bright day to darkness for thyself.
 A cozening old man hath come to thee,
 Hath filled thy heart with terrors and alarms,
 And with his talk of Hell and Paradise
 Hath sown the seeds of folly in thy heart.
 Thou hast accepted him and his religion,
 Hast glorified his doctrine and his rites,
 Hast flung aside the customs of the Sháhs—
 The mighty of the world, thy predecessors—
 And wrecked the Faith professed by paladins.
 Why dost thou disregard the past and future ?
 Thou art the son of him on whom of all
 The folk the glorious Sháh² bestowed the crown,
 And he chose thee among his choicest ones
 In preference to the offspring of Jamshíd,

¹ Paighú.² Kai Khusrau.

So that, like Kai Khusrau—the man of vengeance— V. 1504
 Thou wast more glorious than the other Kaians.
 Thou hadst, famed monarch! royal might and lustre,
 Grace, power, and magnificence, with standards,
 Vast armies, elephants caparisoned,
 And treasuries fulfilled with goodly havings,
 While every chief was well disposed toward thee,
 And thou didst shine resplendent in the world—
 Ardîbihisht with Sol in Aries.
 God gave to thee the kingship of the earth,
 And all thy chieftains stood before thee. Thou
 Didst err, ungratefully, despite His care,
 While even after He had made thee Sháh
 An ancient sorcerer misled thee. When
 The news arrived I saw the stars by day!
 Now have I written thee a friendly letter,
 For I am both thy friend and good ally.
 When thou hast read it make complete ablution,
 And countenance no longer that impostor;
 Put off the cincture that is round thy loins,
 And quaff with joy the sparkling wine once more.
 Cast not aside the usage of the Sháhs,
 The mighty of the world, thy predecessors.
 Now if thou wilt accept this goodly counsel
 Thy life shall not be injured by the Turkmans,
 Their territory, with Kashán and Chín,
 Shall be to thee e'en as Írán itself,
 I will bestow on thee the boundless treasures
 That I have gotten me by mine own toils,
 Fair-coated steeds¹ bedecked with gold and silver,
 And trappings all inlaid with gems, and I
 Will with the treasures send to thee boy-slaves
 And handmaids—pictures all—with crispy locks.
 But if thou wilt accept not this my counsel,
 Then shalt thou feel my heavy iron bonds,

¹ "des chevaux aux couleurs de bon augure" (Mohl).

V. 1505 For I will follow in a month or twain
 This letter and will desolate thy realm,
 Lead from the Turkmans and from Chín a host,
 Whose tents the earth itself will not support,
 Will fill the channel of Jíhún with musk,
 And stanch therewith the waters of the sea,
 Consign thy pictured palace to the flames,
 And raze thee utterly, both root and branch,
 Will set your land on fire from end to end,
 And skewer you all together with mine arrows.
 Those that are old among the Íránians
 Will I make prisoners, will behead the worthless,
 And carry off the women and the children
 As slaves to mine own land; I will lay waste
 Your country and uproot the trees. So much
 I had to say. See that thou do thy part,
 And lay this letter's counsel to thy heart."

§ 6

How Arjásþ sent Envoys to Gushitþsp

Now when the monarch's minister had finished
 The letter, all the captains being present,
 Arjásþ rolled, sealed, and then delivered it
 To those old sorcerers, instructing them:—
 V. 1506 "Be prudent, go together to his palace,
 And, when ye see him on the throne of state,
 Both bow yourselves forthwith, and proffer him
 The worship that pertaineth unto kings,
 With eyes upon the ground. When ye are seated,
 Look steadfastly upon his shining crown,
 Deliver mine enlightening embassy,
 Attend to what he sayeth in reply,
 And, having heard the answer every whit,
 Kiss ye the ground before him and depart."

Then Bídírafsh, the vengeful, left the presence,
And bare his banner forth toward famous Balkh,
While with him fared Námkhást, his headstrong com-
rade—

One to be shunned by all that seek for fame.
Arrived at Balkh they went toward the court
Afoot and, drawing nearer to Gushtásp,
Bowed down themselves before him on the threshold.
When they beheld his visage o'er the throne,
As though it were the sun above the moon,
They did obeisance, such as slaves would do,
Before the Sháh—the monarch of the happy—
Then gave to him the letter of the king,
The letter written in the Turkman¹ script.
The Sháh, on opening the letter, raged
And writhed. He called his counsellor Jámásp,
The chosen chiefs, the captains of the host,
The experienced magnates and the archimages,
Then spread the Zandavasta out before him.
He called his Prophet and archmage, he called
Zarír, his well beloved, his general,
Who was his brother and the chief of all
The warriors, and then world-paladin
Because Asfandiyár, the cavalier,
Was still a youth. Zarír was leader, warden,
The refuge of the world, the horsemen's stay:
'Twas his to clear the earth of evil doers,
And couch his lance in battle. Said Gushtásp:—
"Arjásp, the ruler of Túrán and Chín,
Hath written unto me in terms like these!"
And he informed them of the scurrile words
Addressed to him by the Túránian king.
"What are your views herein," he said to them,
"What do ye say? How will the matter end?
How very ill-advised was amity

V. 1507

¹ Paighú.

With one who hath so small a stock of wisdom !
 My race is from Íraj of holy birth,
 While he is sprung from Túr, the sorcerer.
 How then can there be peace betwixt us twain,
 Although I used to deem it possible ?
 And now let him that is the most possest
 Of reputation speak before the rest."

§ 7

How Zarír made Answer to Arjásp

v. 1508

Whenas the sovereign had spoken thus,
 Zarír, the leader, and Asfandiyár
 Unsheathed their scimitars forthwith, and cried :—
 "If there be any one in all the world
 Who holdeth not Zarduhsht to be a prophet,
 Is disobedient and approacheth not
 The courtgate of the glorious Sháh, nor girdeth
 His loins before the splendid throne, rejecting
 The way and good religion, and refusing
 To be a slave thereto, his life will we
 Part from his body with our scimitars,
 And set his head upon a lofty stake."

He that was hight Zarír, the Íránian leader,
 A hero valiant as the rending lion,
 Said to the world's king : "O illustrious !
 If I may have permission from the Sháh
 To give Arjásp, the sorcerer, his answer. . . ."
 And Sháh Gushtásp approved thereof : "Go to,"
 He said, "arise then, give him his reply,
 And make his warriors¹ of Khallukh like gloeds."

Zarír, with glorious Asfandiyár,
 And with that prosperous minister, Jámásp,
 Departed with stern hearts and frowning looks.

¹ tigín.

And wrote a letter to Arjásþ the foul—
 A fit response. Zarír, chief of the host,
 Took it still open, bare it to the Sháh,
 And read it out to him. The world-lord marvelled
 At that sage general and cavalier,
 And at Jámásp, and at Asfandiyár,
 Then fastened up the letter, wrote thereon
 His name, and called to him the ambassadors.
 "Take this," he said, "and bear it to Arjásþ.
 Henceforth perchance ye will not tread my roads.
 Were not safe-conduct for ambassadors
 Enjoined expressly in the Zandavasta,
 I would have wakened you from drowsihead,
 And hung you all alive upon the gibbet,
 In order that yon worthless one might learn
 That he may not exalt his neck with kings."

V. 1509

He threw the letter at them, saying: "Take it,
 And bear it to the Turkman sorcerer.
 Say: 'Thy calamity is drawing nigh,
 The need for blood and dust hath come upon thee.
 Be thy neck smitten and thy spirit wounded,
 And may thy bones be scattered on the ground.
 Next Dai, God willing, I will habit me
 In heavy iron mail, lead forth the host
 Against the country of Túrán to war,
 And ruinate the realm of the Gurgsár.'"¹

§ 8

*How the Envoys returned to Arjásþ with the
 Letter of Gushtásp*

The monarch of the earth, when he had ended
 His speech, sent for his general, greeted him,
 Put in his charge the ambassadors, and said:—

¹ Of the Wolf-heads—the name of a tribe.

"See them beyond the borders of Írán."

The envoys left the presence of Gushtásp,
And went their way with dust upon their heads,
The Sháh dismissing them with ignominy.
From glorious Írán they reached Khallukh,
But in Khallukh were still inglorious.
As soon as they perceived the monarch's palace
Afar, surmounted by the sable standard,
They lighted from their proudly pacing steeds,
Their hearts were broken and their eyes were dim.
They went afoot before their sovereign,
With souls all darkness and with livid cheeks,
And gave to him the letter of the Sháh—
The answer of Zarír the cavalier.

V. 1510

The letter was unfolded by a scribe,
Who read it to the king of Turkman¹ race.
The writing in the letter of the prince,
The leader of the brave, the warrior-horseman,
Ran : "Thine insulting letter to the Sháh
Arrived, and I have listened to and marked
Words that were not becoming thee to utter,
Words that should not be written or divulged,
Not fit to be read out and hearkened to.
Thus spakest thou : 'I will lead forth anon
A host against that jocund land of thine'
For my part I need not four months or twain
Ere I lead forth my Lions of the fray.
Bring not upon thyself increase of toil,
Because I shall unlock my treasury,
And lead a thousand thousand warriors,
All men of name, all veterans in fight,
All offspring of Íraj, the paladin,
Not of Afrásiyáb, or of the Turkmans,²
All moon-faced men, all kings to look upon,
All upright in their stature and their speech,

¹ Paighú.

² *Ibid.*

All worthy of the empire and the throne,
 All worthy of the treasure, crown, and host,
 All spearmen and all swordsmen, all of them
 The leaders and the shatterers of armies,
 All brandishing their lances as they ride,
 All with my name inscribed upon their signets,
 All converts to the Faith, all men of wisdom,
 All worthy of the carring and the armlet.
 When they are ware that I have bound the drums
 Upon the elephants their horses' hoofs
 Lay low the heights, and when they arm for battle
 They send the dust-clouds flying to high heaven.
 Firm as a mountain are they in the saddle,
 The hill-tops shatter at them, while among them.
 For choice there are two warrior-cavaliers—
 Zarír, the leader, and Asfandiyár—
 Who, when they don their iron panoply,
 Bestride the sun and moon, and, when they shoulder
 The crashing mace, their Grace illumineth
 The Grace and form of others. As they stand
 Before the host thou must perforce observe them.
 They with their crowns and thrones are like the sun,
 Their countenances shine with Grace and fortune.
 The other troops and chiefs are like myself—
 Approved and chosen of the archimages—
 So never fill up the Jíhún with musk,
 For I will open thy parched treasures,
 And, if it pleaseth God, will trample down
 Thy head in fight upon the day of battle."

V 1511

Arjásp descended from his throne, amazed
 At reading this, and bade his generals :—
 "Call out the whole host at tomorrow's dawn."

The warriors¹ of the army, chosen men
 Of Chín, came to Túrán from every quarter.
 The monarch had two brothers—Áhrimans—

V. 1512

¹ tigin.

One hight Kuhram, Andarímán the other,
 Who both received drums, elephants, and standards,
 Bedecked with yellow, red, and violet.
 He gave to them three hundred thousand men,
 Selected and courageous cavaliers.
 He oped the treasury-doors and paid the troops,
 Bade blow the trumpets and load up the baggage.
 He had Kuhram, his brother, called in haste,
 And gave him charge of one wing of the host.
 He gave the other to Andarímán,
 And took his own position in the centre.
 There was an agèd Turkman named Gurgsár,
 To whom the king gave the command in chief:
 Thou wouldst have said: "He knoweth naught but ill."
 To Bídirafsh, the brother of this man,
 He sent a banner blazoned with a wolf.
 There was a valiant man by name Khashásh,
 Who fought afoot with lions; him the king
 Made leader of the scouts and of the vanguard:
 They bore his flag as champion of the host.
 There was a Turkman who was named Húshdív;
 The monarch sent him to the rear, and said:—
 "Keep guard behind the army and if thou
 See one deserting slay him on the spot,
 And take good heed herein."

Thus in fierce wrath

He fared with full heart and with eyes all tears.
 He ravaged as he went, he set on fire
 The palaces, and razed trees, root and branch.
 That king of infidels led forth his host,
 With vengeful heart, against the Íránian coast,

§ 9

How Gushtásp assembled his Troops

As soon as tidings came to Sháh Gushtásp:—
 “The ruler of the Turkmans and of Chín
 Hath made his preparations and set forth,
 Dispatching to the front the brave Khashásh,”
 He bade his general: “At dawn tomorrow
 Array the elephants, lead out the host.”

He wrote a letter to his marchlords thus:—
 “The Khán hath left the pathway of the great.
 Come to my court-gate, all! because my foes
 Are at the border.”

When the letter reached
 Those nobles with this news: “There hath appeared
 A foeman who ambitioneth the world,”
 Troops gathered at the portal of the Sháh,
 Out-numbering the grass-blades on the ground.
 The warriors of the world girt up their loins
 To aid the Kaian Sháh, the world-possessor,
 And, as he had commanded, all the marchlords
 Set forward to the court-gate of the king.
 Anon a thousand thousand gathered round
 The Sháh, that famous and benignant Kaian,
 Who visited the camp, reviewed the troops,
 And chose the fit. It joyed the glorious Sháh,
 Whose heart was all astound at such a host.
 Next day Gushtásp went with the archimages,
 The chiefs, the great men, and the army-captains,
 Unlocked the treasures hoarded by Jamshid,
 Gave to the soldiers two years’ pay and then,
 When he had given mail and rations, sounded
 The drums and trumpets, loaded up the baggage,
 And ordered to be borne before the host
 The conquering standard of the glorious Sháhs.

He led the troops to battle with Arjás—
 An army such as none had ever seen.
 None could discern the daylight or the moon
 For murk of flying dust-clouds, troops, and steeds
 Whose neighing and the war-cries drowned the drums.
 A multitude of banners were displayed,
 And spearheads pierced the clouds like trees that grow
 On mountain-tops or like reed-beds in spring.
 Upon this wise by Sháh Gushtásp's command
 The army made its way from land to land.

§ 10

How Jámásp foretold the Issue of the Battle to Gushtásp

When he had reached Jíhún from famous Balkh
 The captain of the army made a halt.
 The Sháh departed from among the troops,
 Alighted from his steed and, having mounted
 Upon the throne, called unto him forthwith
 Jámásp his counsellor, the chief archmage,
 The first among the nobles, and the lustre
 Both of the great men and the generals.
 So pure in person was he, so devout
 Of soul, that mysteries were revealed to him.
 He was a mighty reader of the stars,
 And who in point of knowledge had his standing? ¹
 Of him the Sháh inquired: "God hath endowed thee
 With honest counsel and the good religion.
 There is none like thee in the world; in short
 The Ruler of the world hath given thee knowledge;
 So make thy calculations of the stars,
 And tell me all the aspect of affairs.
 How will the battle go from first to last,
 And which of us will meet disaster here?"

¹ See p. 19. .

The old Jámásp was grieved, with rueful looks
 He said : " I would to God that He, the Just,
 Had not bestowed on me this skill and wisdom,
 For then the Sháh would not have questioned me ;
 Yet will I speak for, if I answer not,
 The king of kings will have me put to death."

The world-lord answered : " By the name of God,
 By his—the holy bringer of the Faith—
 And by the life of that brave cavalier,
 Zarír, and that of great Asfandiyár,
 I will not ever do thee injury,
 Myself, or bid another so to do.
 Say what thou knowest touching this affair,
 For thou canst give, and I am seeking, help."

The sage made answer : " O illustrious Sháh !
 May thy crown flourish everlastingly.
 Know, Kaian warrior, seeker of renown !
 When fight shall bring the heroes face to face,
 When they shall raise their shouts and battle-cries,
 And thou wouldst say : ' They tear up all the moun-
 tains,'

The mighty men of valour will advance,
 And air grow pitchy with the dust of battle ;
 Then will the world be darkened in thine eyes,
 Fire will fulfil the earth and reek the air,
 While mid the blows struck and the massive maces,
 Descending like smiths' hammers on the steel,
 The twang of bowstring will oppress the brain,
 And air re-echo with the charger's neigh ;
 The heavens will be broken, spheres and vaults,
 The standards drenched with gore. Full many sons
 Wilt thou see fatherless and fathers sonless !
 First will Ardshír, that Kaian, the king's son,
 The famed and gallant, urge his charger forth,
 And fling whoe'er opposeth in the dust,
 Unhorsing of the Turkman cavaliers

A number greater than the tale of stars,
 Yet in the end be slain and his good name
 Erased. The monarch's son, the great Shídas, p
 In vengeance then will urge his sable steed,
 Rage, draw his sword, and charging slay full many
 A horse and man, but in the end his fortune
 Will be abased, and his crowned head be bare.
 Then my son will come forward with his loins
 Girt with my girdle for Shídas's avengement,
 And go, like Rustam, in between the hosts.
 How many men of name and warriors
 Of Chín will that brave Lion bring to earth,
 And undergo much travail in the fray!
 I tell the king of kings that Girámí,
 What time the Íránians drop the glorious flag
 Of Káwa, will behold it from his charger,
 All dust and blood, and leaping to the ground
 Will raise it bravely, with the scimitar
 In one hand and the standard in the other—
 The violet standard—and while thus bestead
 Will overthrow the foe and root the life
 Out of those Áhrimans, then suddenly
 An enemy vindictively will strike
 One hand off with the trenchant scimitar,
 V. 1517 And Girámí will seize the violet flag
 Between his teeth and hold it therewithal,
 While with one hand he maketh foes to vanish:
 No man hath seen a feat more wonderful;
 Yet will a Turkman with an arrow smite
 His breast and bring his head and crown to dust.
 Next nobly born Nastúr, son of Zarír,
 Will urge his charger forward like a lion,
 And when at last he shall return in triumph,
 With hands that have been stretched out o'er the foe,
 Nívzár, the chosen horseman, will go forth,
 The world-lord's son, will overthrow three score

Of foemen, and display the mastery
 Of paladins, but in the end the Turkmans
 Will smite him with their arrows and will fling
 His elephantine body to the dust.
 Next to advance will be that valiant Lion,
 That warrior-horseman who is named Zarír.
 He will go forth, a lasso in his hand,
 Upon his Arab bay, arrayed in breastplate
 Of gold resplendent as the moon. The troops
 Will be astonished at him. He will take
 A thousand warriors of the Turkman host,
 Put them in bonds, and send them to the Sháh,
 And wheresoe'er that prince shall turn his face
 He will pour forth his foemen's blood in streams.
 No one will take that royal paladin,
 Who will confound the monarch of the tents.¹
 Then will Zarír see great Ardshír o'erthrown
 With livid cheeks and form like turmeric,
 Will bitterly lament him and, grown grim,
 Urge his bay Arab onward and will set
 In bitter wrath his face against the Khán :
 Thou wouldest say : ' Ne'er hath he looked on flight ' '
 When he shall see Arjásp among the host
 He will proclaim the praise of Sháh Gushtásp,
 O'erthrow the battle of the enemy,
 And, looking not to any one on earth,
 Proclaim the Zandavasta of Zarduhsht,
 And put his kingly confidence in God ;
 But in the end his fortune will be darkened,
 The chosen Tree be felled, for there will come
 One, Bídírafsh by name, and make his way
 Toward the spear that hath the violet standard,
 But, daring not to face the chosen champion,
 Will lie in wait for him upon the road,
 And bar it like a maddened elephant,

V 1518

¹ "le roi du peuple qui demeure sous des tentes" (Mohl).

While grasping in his hand a venomed sword
As prince Zarír returneth from the fight,
And thou wouldst say · ‘He cometh from a feast,’
That Turkman will let fly at him an arrow,
Not daring to assail him openly,
And thus the chief of nobles will be lost
Through loathly Bídírafsh, who will bear off
His charger and his saddle to the Turkmans.
What man will then be foremost to avenge him ?
Anon this famous, mighty host will close,
Like wolves and lions, on the foe, and earth
Will in the mellay blush with warriors’ blood,
Their faces all be wan, the bravest tremble,
The army’s dust will hide the sun and moon,
While flashes from the spearheads, swords, and arrows
Will glisten as the stars among the clouds.

V. 1519 Then Bídírafsh, that valiant miscreant,
Will go forth like a wolf that raveneth,
And, holding in his hand the envenomed glaive,
Will urge his steed like some mad elephant.
By his hand will a multitude of troops,
And those the choicest of the Sháh’s, be slain.
Then will the glorious Asfandiyár,
With troops behind and God to succour him,
In blood-stained raiment and with soul fulfilled
By hate bring Doomsday down on Bídírafsh,
Smite with an Indian sword a single blow,
And hurl down half his body from the saddle.
Then with his iron mace in hand the prince
Will illustrate his Grace and majesty,
Will break the foemen with a single charge,
And shall he let them go when they are broken ?
Nay, with a spearpoint will he gather them,
And scatter them abroad in utter ruin,
While in the end the king of Chín will flee
Before Asfandiyár, that glorious Kaian,

And in his flight will make toward Túrán,
 Heart-broken and in tears, and cross the waste
 With but a scanty following, while the Sháh
 Will be triumphant and the foe destroyed.
 Know, O thou chosen chief of sovereigns !
 What I have said will not be otherwise.
 From me thou wilt hear nothing more or less,
 Regard me not henceforth with lowering looks.
 I have not said the things that I have said
 Save at thy bidding, O victorious Sháh !
 And as for what the glorious Sháh hath asked
 Of that deep sea and dark abysm of fate,
 I have not kept back aught that I have seen,
 Else why should I have told the Sháh these secrets ? ”

V. 1520

Now when the Sháh, the master of the world,
 Heard this revealed he sank back on his throne,
 And dropped the golden mace, thou wouldst have said :—
 “ His Grace and majesty alike are gone.”
 He fell upon his face and swooned away,
 He spake no word and uttered not a sound.
 The monarch when his sense returned to him
 Descended from his throne, wept bitterly,
 And “ What to me,” he said, “ are throne and kingship
 When all my day shall have been turned to gloom,
 My Moons, brave cavaliers, and princes gone ?
 What need have I for empire and fortune,
 For puissance and host, for crown and throne,
 When those that I love best, the most renowned,
 The chosen of the host, shall have departed,
 And from my body pluck my wounded heart ? ”

Then to Jámásp he said : “ Since things are so,
 When it is time to go forth to the battle,
 I will not call upon my valiant brother,
 I will not burn mine agèd mother’s heart.
 I will forbid his going to the fight,
 And give the host to glorious Gurazm.

Those of blood Kaian with my youthful sons,
 Who all are as my body and my soul,
 Now will I call before me, will prevent
 Their arming and will seat them in my presence.
 How can the points of poplar arrows reach
 These rocks and mountains higher than high heaven ? ”

The sage replied : “ Most gracious, glorious Sháh !
 If these be not before the army, helmed,
 Who will dare face the warriors of Chín ?
 Who will retrieve the Grace and holy Faith ?
 Rise from this dust, be seated on the throne,
 And ruin not the Grace of sovereignty,
 For ’tis God’s purpose which no shift can stay ;
 The Maker of the world is not a tyrant.
 Thou wilt not profit by indulging grief,
 For that which shall be is as good as done.
 Distress thy heart no more then but acknowledge
 The justice of the Maker of the world.”

V. 1521

He gave much counsel while the Sháh gave ear,
 Grew like the sun, and mounted to his throne,
 And as he sat his purpose was confirmed
 To fight the ambitious monarch of Chigil ;
 Oppressed with thought he gat no sleep that night,
 And was all eagerness for war and fight.

§ 11

How Gushtásp and Arjásp arrayed their Hosts

Gushtásp, according to Jámásp’s advice,
 When morning breathed and starlight disappeared,
 Led down his chosen warriors to the field,
 And, at the season when the scent of roses
 Is wafted houseward by the breath of dawn,
 Dispatched according to the Íránian custom
 His scouts on every side. A cavalier

Approached and said : " O monarch of the world !
The enemy is nigh. So great a host
Ne'er came before from Turkistán or Chín.
They have encamped hard by and pitched their tents
On mountains, dales, and plains. Their general
Hath sent out scouts, and his and thine have met."

Thereat high-born Gushtásp, the valiant Sháh,
Called for his general—glorious Zarír—
And gave to him the standard, saying : " Haste :
Array the elephants and arm the troops."

The general went forth and ranged his host,
All fain to battle with the king of Chín.
Gushtásp gave one wing to Asfandiyár,
With fifty thousand chosen cavaliers,
Because he had an elephantine breast
And lion's heart. Upon the other wing
He stationed a select and goodly band,
And gave it to the cherished warrior,
Who was the son and equal of the Sháh,
The high, exalted, and exultant prince,
To whom the Sháh had given the name Shídasps ;
While fifty thousand valiant cavaliers
He gave to glorious Zarír, the leader,
Assigning him the centre, for he was
A savage Lion and the Sháh's own equal.
The rearguard he entrusted to Nastúr,
Of glorious race, the Lustre of Zarír.
The army thus arrayed, the Sháh, o'ercome
With grief and spent with labour, sought the height,
Sat down upon his fair, resplendent throne,
And thence surveyed the army.

V 1522

Then Arjásp,
The monarch of the cavaliers of Chín,
In like wise ranged his forces and dispatched
A hundred thousand horsemen of Khallukh,
All brave and tried, to Bídírafsh, who had,

As general, the drums and golden standard,
 Entrusting one wing of the host to him,
 Whom not a lion loose would face. He gave
 The other to Gurgsár, and gave withal
 A hundred thousand chosen cavaliers.
 In like wise in the centre of the host
 He posted a select and goodly band,
 And gave them to that stubborn sorcerer,
 Námkhást by name, the son of Hazárán.¹
 With chosen horsemen five score thousand strong,
 Whose prowess was renowned throughout the world,
 He took his own post rearward in reserve,
 O'erlooking every portion of his powers.
 He had one son, a man of high repute,
 A veteran and pre-eminent in war,
 A noble cavalier by name Kuhram
 Above whose head much heat and cold had passed,
 This son of his he set to oversee
 The army and direct the strategy.

§ 12

*The Beginning of the Battle between the Iránians and
 Túránians, and how Ardshír, Shírú, and Shúlasp were
 slain*

V. 1523 Now when that night had passed and it was day,
 And when the world-illuming sun shone forth,
 The troops of both hosts mounted on their saddles,
 While Sháh Gushtásp observed them from the height.
 What time the glorious Sháh saw from the mountain
 The warriors in their saddles he desired
 Bihzád, his sable charger, to be brought:
 Thou wouldst have said: "'Tis surely Mount Bístún!"
 They put the bards thereon, and then he mounted.

¹ Reading with P.

Whenas they set the battle in array,
And champion challenged champion, first they sent
A shower of arrows like a springtide hail,
Such that the sun's course was invisible !
Who will believe that hath not seen that marvel ?
The fountain of the sun was garnitured
With javelin-heads that sparkled like a river !
One would have said : " The sky is overcast,
And from the clouds are raining diamonds,"
While through the mace-men and the javelin-men,
Who charged on one another, all the air
Assumed the hue of night and all the earth
Was inundate with gore. First came Ardshír,
That goodly horseman and the world-lord's son,
Like some mad elephant upon the field ;
Thou wouldst have said : " Can it be Tús the chief ? "
Thus wheelèd he before the host, not knowing
What sun and moon decreed. An arrow struck him
Upon the loins, transfixing his Kaian mail,
And that prince tumbled headlong from his bay,
His stainless form defiled and smirched with blood.
Woe for that fair face radiant as the moon,
Which never more the wise Sháh looked upon !
Then came like flying dust high-born Shírú,
Whose heart was full and visage wan, before
The line of battle, bearing in his hand
A venomed sword ; he roared as 'twere a lion,
Brought down like onager full many a foe,
And in his vengeance for that royal horseman
Slew fifty score of hostile cavaliers,
But as he was returning from the fray,
When thus he had incarnadined the earth,
There came an arrow at his nape, the prince
Fell. Woe for that brave, noble warrior,
Who died and nevermore beheld his sire !
The next to sally forth was prince Shidasp,

One like the moon, a man of royal mien.
 He, seated on a steed like indigo,
 Fleet as gazelle and huge as elephant,
 Rushed on the field of battle, whirled and brandished
 His lance as 'twere a twig, held in his steed,
 And shouted, saying: "Which is bold Kuhram,
 Whose look is as the look of wolf and tiger?"

A div advanced, exclaiming: "I am one
 To bite the famished lion."

Then they wheeled
 With lances, and the Sháh's son speared the Turkman,
 Dismounted him, and, cutting off his head,
 Flung down his goodly girdle to the dust;
 Then wheeled before the warriors of Chín,
 As though he were a mountain on the saddle.
 In sooth eye never saw a man so goodly;
 His beauty drew all eyes Howbeit a Turkman
 Let fly at him an arrow, and that prince,
 That offspring of the Sháh, went to the winds.
 Woe for that lost one reared so daintily,
 Whose face his father was no more to see!

§ 13

How Girámí, Jámásp's Son, and Nívzár were slain

Then of the leaders of the host went forth
 The brave son of Jámásp the minister,
 V. 1525 A valiant horseman, Girámí by name,
 Like to the son of Zál, the son of Sám.
 Upon a chestnut charger fleet and trusty
 He stood before the battle of the men
 Of Chín, and, having prayed to God the Judge,
 "Who of you," said he, "is of lion-heart
 To come against my life-destroying spear?
 And where is that o'erweening sorcerer,

Námkhást by name, the son of Hazárán ?”¹

Námkhást went forth to him: thou wouldst have said :—

“That charger hath a mountain on its back !”
 Those two accomplished horsemen wheeled about
 With mace and lance, with shaft and scimitar,
 But gallant Girámí had lion’s strength ;
 That valiant cavalier could not withstand him,
 And, though a man of battle, took to flight
 On seeing that Kaian puissance and keen sword ;
 Then Girámí rode onward in fierce wrath,
 With heart all raging to avenge the fallen,
 And fell upon the centre of the foe.
 Anon a blast rose from the mountain-skirt
 As those two armies mingled in the mellay
 And sent the dark dust flying. In the turmoil
 That followed ’twixt the hosts, amid the strokes
 Of scimitars and sable clouds of dust,
 Fell from the Íránians’ hands the splendid standard
 Of Káwa. Girámí beheld that flag,
 All indigo of hue, which they had flung
 From elephant-back, dismounting lifted it,
 Shook off the dust, and cleared the soil away.
 Now when the warriors of Chín beheld him
 Raise from the ground that flagstaff famed and dear,
 And, after having cleansed it, bear it off,
 Their bravest warriors surrounded him,
 And, thus assailing him on all sides, struck
 One hand off with a scimitar. He seized
 The flag of Farídún² between his teeth
 And, strange to tell, plied with the other hand
 His mace ! At last they slew him wretchedly,
 And flung him vilely on the burning dust.
 Alas for that brave, warlike cavalier !
 That ancient sage³ beheld him not again.

¹ Reading with P.

² Cf. Vol. 1. p. 157.

³ Jámásp.

Immediately went forth Nastúr, the Lion,
 A warrior, Kaian-born, son of Zarír.
 He slew a countless multitude of foes,
 For he had learned to battle from his father,
 And in the end returned, victorious
 And glad, and stood again before his sire.
 Next there went forth the chosen cavalier,
 Nívzár, son of the monarch of the world.
 He rode a charger fleet of foot—a steed
 Of thousands—came to that dark battlefield,
 And shouted, saying: "Chosen warriors!
 What man of name is there among you all,
 What valiant, veteran wielder of the spear?
 Let him confront me now with lance in hand,
 Because a man of mettle fronteth you."

The cavaliers of Chín rushed forth at him,
 And strove to overthrow him. Brave Nívzár,
 Who was the finest horseman in the world,
 Like some wroth elephant and rending lion,
 Kept wheeling round the warriors of Chín:
 Thou wouldst have said: "He rolleth up the earth!"
 He slaughtered sixty warriors world-renowned,
 And nurtured all upon the dust of battle,
 But in the end an arrow from a bow
 Struck him as it had been a flash from heaven.
 He fell from that fleet steed of goodly hue,
 And died. Behold the end of combating!
 Alas! that noble cavalier and Lion,
 Who fell in vain—the image of his sire—
 And woe is me for that fair face and form!
 Now when that goodly cavalier was slain
 The myriad warriors that were around
 Engaged in every quarter of the field,
 And raised the dust-clouds from earth's face. Two se'n-
 nights
 Passed in that fight for not a horseman slept,

The earths¹ were filled with slain and wounded men, V. 1527
 The passage of the wind was barred by dust,
 The dales and deserts were in tulip-dress,
 And blood flowed over waste and wilderness.

§ 14

How Zarír, the Brother of Gushtásp, was slain by Bídírafsh

In these encounters two weeks passed away,
 And all the while the fighting grew more fierce.
 Then brave Zarír advanced before the host,
 Bestriding his huge chestnut, threw himself
 Upon the encampment of the enemy,
 Like blazing fire and wind amid the grass,
 Slew, and dispatched them to their last repose:
 None that beheld withstood him. Then Arjásp,
 Perceiving that the prince had slaughtered many
 Of name, cried loudly to his warriors —
 “What! will ye let Khallukh go to the winds?
 We have been fighting for two weary weeks,
 And still I see no prospect of the end.
 The warriors of Sháh Gushtásp have slain
 Full many a man of name among our troops,
 And now Zarír is in the midst of you,
 As ’twere a fierce wolf or a rending lion,
 And he hath slaughtered all my followers,
 My noble Turkmans and my men of war!
 We must devise a remedy for this,
 Or trudge back to Túrán, for if this man
 Continue thus he will not leave Áyús,
 Khallukh or Chín. What man of you in quest
 Of fame will show among the troops, go forth
 Man-like, alone, and compass world-renown?¹
 I will bestow on him my daughter’s hand,

V. 1528

¹ Cf. Vol. II, p. 15 and note.

And give to him the conduct of my host."

The soldiers answered not a word, for all
 Feared that Wild Boar. Immediately Zarír
 The chief, the paladin of paladins,
 Advancing as he were a furious wolf,
 Fell on them like a maddened elephant,
 Or lion, slaughtering and overthrowing.
 Arjásp, beholding this, was so astound
 That day turned dark to him. Again he said --
 "O great, brave¹ princes, warriors of Chín!
 Regard ye not your kindred and allies,
 Nor yet the wounded groaning 'neath the feet
 Of one who is as a consuming fire,
 With Sám's mace and the arrows of Árish,
 Whose flames e'en now are burning up my host,
 And scorching all my kingdom? Who is there
 Among you all, one puissant of hand,
 To go against yon maddened Elephant?
 Whoever will attempt yon warrior-slayer,
 And hurl him from his steed, upon that man
 Will I bestow a treasury full of gold,
 And raise his helmet higher than the sky."

Still no man answered him a word. Arjásp
 Was in amazement and his cheeks grew pale.
 He spake the third time to the troops, but when
 No answer came to him he held his peace.

At last the lusty Bídírafsh advanced—
 The foul, that dog, that warlock, that old wolf—
 And spake thus to Arjásp: "O mighty Sun,
 In root and stem like to Afrásiyáb!

V. 1529 Thee have I brought my life and I have made it,
 Sweet as it is, thy shield. I will confront
 Yon raging Elephant. If I shall seize,
 And fling him to the dust before the king,
 Let me be leader of this countless host."

¹ tigín.

Thereat Arjásp rejoiced, praised Bídirafsh,
Gave his own steed and saddle to that chief,
And therewithal a keen two-headed dart
Of steel that would have pierced an iron mountain.
That foul enchanter with the loathly form
Went toward Zarír, the leader of the folk,
But seeing from afar his fearsome fury,
His beard besoiled, his eyes fulfilled, with dust,
A mace like Sám the hero's in his hand,
And slain before him heaped up like a mountain,
Adventured not to face him openly,
But skirmished round him stealthily and hurled
Unseen at him the double-headed dart.
His royal mail was pierced, his kingly form
Bedrenched with blood. He tumbled from his steed.
Woe for that youthful, royal cavalier !
Foul Bídirafsh alighted, stripped the prince,
And bare off to the king the horse and girdle,
The standard and the goodly, jewelled crown,
While all the army shouted and paraded
The standard on an elephant. Gushtásp,
What time he looked forth from the mountain-top,
Saw not amid the dust that Moon of chiefs,
And said : " I fear me that the full-orbed Moon,
That ever gave a lustre to the host—
My valiant brother, glorious Zarír,
Who used to overthrow the angry lion—
Hath been dismounted, for the warriors
Have ceased from charging and the princes shout not !
Perchance that chief of nobles hath been slain.
Speed to the battlefield a mounted man
Toward yonder sable standard and discover
My royal brother's case, because my heart
Is full and seared for him."

V. 1530

Thus fared the world's king
Till one, whose eyes poured blood-drops, came and said:—

"The Turkman horsemen wretchedly have slain
 Thy Moon, the guardian of thy crown and host,
 Him that was paladin of paladins—
 Zarír the cavalier—for Bídírafsh,
 The chief of all the warlocks of the world,
 Hath overthrown him and borne off the standard."

The world's king, hearing of that slaying, felt
 Death visible. Down to the feet he rent
 His robe, strewed dust upon his jocund crown,
 And said to sage Jámásp: "What shall I say
 To Sháh Luhrásp? How can I send to court
 A messenger? How tell mine ancient sire?
 Alas! that royal warrior! Alas!
 Gone like the bright moon midst the clouds! Bring
 hither

Luhrásp's Gulgún and set thereon my saddle."

He made him ready to avenge his brother,
 And carry on his Faith and precedent,
 But "Pause!" said his experienced minister,
 "Thy going to revenge is ill-advised"

So, as that prescient minister enjoined,
 The Sháh alighted and resumed the throne,
 Thus saying to his troops: "What Lion is there
 To take revenge for glorious Zarír,
 And, urging forth his steed with that intent,
 Retrieve my brother's saddle and his charger?
 I swear before the Master of the world—
 The oath of upright and of noble men—

V. 1531 That whosoe'er shall go forth from the army,
 On him will I bestow Humái, my daughter."

But not a man came forward from the host,
 And not a single warrior left his post.

§ 15

How Asfandiyár heard of the Slaying of Zarír

Thereafter tidings reached Asfandiyár —

“Zarír, that princely cavalier, is slain.

Thy father, overcome by grief for him,

Now purposeth to take revenge himself.”

The famous hero wrung his hands, and said :—

“What ill doth fortune spare us ? When I saw

Zarír in fight I ever feared this day

Woe for that horseman, warrior, and chief,

Whom fortune hath discrowned ! Who slew that prince,

That valiant Elephant ? Who plucked from earth

That iron Mount ?”

Resigning to a brother

Flag, troops, and his own station, he advanced

Himself and reached the centre, girt his loins,

And seized the royal standard. Now he had

Five brothers, the adornments of the throne,

All men of high renown, the Sháh's compeers.

They held Asfandiyár in reverence,

Because it was his wont to shatter hosts.

That Mainstay of the troops said to those nobles :—

“Ye men of name and scions of the Sháh !

Attend to what I say, observe it well,

And trust the Faith of God, the Lord of all.

Know then, ye princes ! that this is the day

Which will discern the false Faith from the true.

See that ye fear not death or anything,

For none will die but at his fated time,

And if so be that fated time hath come,

What is more glorious than to die in battle ?

Heed not the slain, seek not for further help,

And count not heads. Put not your trust in flight,

And be not terrified at combating.

V. 1532 In battle let your lances' points be low,
 Strive for a space and quit you manfully.
 If ye will do as I have bidden you
 My soul will still be stayed within my body,
 Your name will be renowned throughout the world,
 And all the host of yon old Wolf will perish."

While matters fared thus with Asfandiyár
 His father shouted from the mountain-top :—
 "Ye men of name and warriors of mine,
 Who are as mine own body and my soul !
 Fear ye not arrows, swords, and javelins,
 Because there is no fleeing from our fate.
 By God's Faith and by brave Asfandiyár,
 And by the soul of that loved cavalier,
 Zarír, alighted now in Paradise,
 Luhrásp the Sháh hath written unto me,
 And I have pledged me to that ancient man,
 That, if good fortune giveth me the day,
 I will bestow, when I shall quit the field,
 The crown and throne upon Asfandiyár ;
 I will bestow the royal crown on him
 Just as my sire bestowed the realm on me,
 While Bishútan¹ shall have the host, and I
 Will crown him with a crown of royalty."

§ 16

How Asfandiyár went to battle with Arjás

Asfandiyár, the elephant-bodied hero,
 Lord of the throne and terrible of form,
 Heard what his father shouted from the mountain,
 And hung his head for sorrow. Spear in hand
 He came, bent modestly before his sire,
 And then, as 'twere a div escaped from bond,

¹ One of Asfandiyár's brothers.

Bestrode a stately grey, like blast on rose-leaves
Fell on the foe, slew, and beheaded them,
While all that saw him died of fright. Nastúr,
Son of Zarír the horseman, left his tent,
Went to the keeper of the steeds and bade
To bring him forth one fresh and fleet and broad
Of buttock, like a caracolling mountain.

V. 1533

He set a golden saddle on its back,
And harnessed it and put the bards thereon.
He bound a Kaian lasso to the straps,
Then mounted, after he had armed himself,
And spear in hand rode to the battlefield.
Thus faring till he reached the scene of strife
He sought to light upon his slaughtered sire
He hasted, put his charger to its speed,
Exacting vengeance, slaying as he went,
And when he saw one of the Íránian race
Would ask that noble of the host, and say :—
“Where was it that Zarír, my father, fell—
That warrior, that doughty cavalier?”

There was a certain man, Ardshír by name,
A horseman, one of worth, a hero-taker,
Of whom the youth inquired. That warrior
Directed him to where his slain sire lay.
“He fell,” so spake Ardshír, “amid the host,
Hard by yon sable standard. Thither haste,
And thou mayst look upon his face once more.”

The prince urged on his steed and as he went
He slaughtered foes and dealt destruction round.
He rushed along until he reached his sire,
And, when he saw the corpse upon the dust,
All heart and reason left him. From his saddle
He threw himself upon his father's body,
And thus addressed it: “O my shining Moon,
The lustre of my heart and eyes and soul!
What toil and trouble hadst thou in my nurture,

And whom didst thou commit me to in dying ?
 Since Sháh Luhrásp bestowed the host upon thee,
 And gave Gushtásp the throne and diadem,
 Thou hast administered the troops and realm,
 And battled with a will. Thy fame on earth
 Is bright as thou couldst wish, yet thou art slain
 While still unsatisfied, but I will seek

v. 1534 Thy brother, that auspicious Sháh, and say :—
 ‘Descend thou from that goodly throne of thine.
 Thy conduct is unworthy of my father,
 Go forth then and avenge him on the foe.’ ”

Longwhile he mourned, then mounted. With exclams
 He sought the Sháh upon the goodly throne.
 “Life of thy father,” said the king of kings,
 “Why hast thou filled thine eyes with tears ? ”

Replied

The Kaian-born : “O monarch of the world !
 Go and avenge my sire, because my lord,
 His black beard musk-perfumed, is left to lie
 Upon the arid dust ! ”

Now when the Sháh
 Heard, daylight blackened to him and the world
 Loured on its lord ; his elephantine form
 Shrank, and “Bring forth,” he said, “my sable steed,
 My battle-mail, and casque, because today
 In wreak for him will I pour warriors’ blood
 In many a stream and light a fire whose reek
 Shall reach to Saturn ! ”

When the warriors
 Saw from the field—the hosts’ dark scene of strife—
 Their sovereign arming, and that he would go
 To seek revenge, they said : “The king of kings,
 And master of the world, will not go forth
 To battle, seeking wreak, with our consent,
 Else what need is there to array the host ? ”

The noble minister addressed the Sháh,

And said : " Thou shouldst not go upon the field.
 Give to Nastúr the steed that thou wouldst mount,
 And send him forth to battle with the foe,
 For better than thou canst will he require
 The vengeance that is owing for his sire."

V. 1535

§ 17

How Nastúr and Asfandiyár slew Bídírafsh

The Sháh then gave his steed Bihzád, his helm
 Of steel, and sable breastplate to Nastúr;
 The slaughtered prince's son who, armed and mounted,
 Rode forth between the opposing hosts and, halting
 Before the battle of the enemy,
 Heaved from his breast a deep, cold sigh, and cried :—
 " Nastúr am I, the offspring of Zarír :
 The lion dareth not encounter me.
 Where is that warlock Bídírafsh who holdeth
 The flag of Káwa ? "

As no answer came

He urged along night-hued Bihzád, and slew
 Full many a valiant warrior of the host,
 While no one went forth to encounter him ;
 On this side too the brave Asfandiyár
 Slew of them past all counting and compute.
 Whenas the king of Chín beheld Nastúr—
 That youthful paladin of Kaian race—
 He cried out to his troops : " What man is this,
 This spearman so accomplished, who hath slain
 My chiefs in numbers numberless, unless
 Zarír, the cavalier, hath come to life—
 He that came out against me at the first,
 And urged his charger in this selfsame way ?
 Where is the chosen warrior Bídírafsh ?
 Ho ! summon him before me, and right soon."

Then Bídírafsh went forth at once, he bare
 The violet flag, was mounted on the charger
 Of prince Zarír, and wore the prince's mail.
 V. 1536 Advancing in his pride toward Nastúr,
 That royal youth, the lustre of the host,
 He grasped the selfsame sword of watered steel
 Wherewith he had o'erthrown Zarír.¹ They wheeled—
 Zarír's son and that chief of Turkman warlocks—
 Contending with their scimitars and arrows.
 Men told the glorious Asfandiyár,
 The Sháh's son, of their combating, who made
 All haste to go to them. Now when that chief
 Of sorcerers beheld this, and perceived
 What man now was advancing to assail him,
 He urged his charger from amid the fray,
 And hurled his baneful weapon at the prince
 To darken if he might that radiant face,
 It missed the prince, who caught it in his hand
 And pierced—a hero's stroke—his foeman's liver,
 So that the point came out the other side.
 Thus Bídírafsh fell from his steed and perished,
 Experiencing the might of Kaian birth.
 Asfandiyár dismounted from his steed,
 And stripping off the armour of Zarír—
 The noble hero—from that ancient warlock,
 Whose head he severed from its trunk withal,
 He carried off the prince's glossy charger,
 The flag, and head of worthless Bídírafsh.
 The Kaian army raised a shout, all sent
 Their clamour through the skies: "The prince hath
 triumphed,
 Hath overthrown the foe, gone forth, and brought
 The dun steed back!"

¹ The sword is mentioned in Jámásp's prophecy (p. 52), but elsewhere we are told that Zarír was slain by a double-headed dart (p. 63). The discrepancy may be due to lack of revision (p. 22).

The prince, that valiant horseman,
Brought to the Sháh Zarír's horse and presented
The head of that old warlock. Thus he slew
The slayer as by law and wont is due.

§ 18

How Arjásf fled from the Battle

When great Asfandiyár had taken vengeance,
And saddled him the charger of Zarír,
He rode back proudly to the battlefield,
Formed three divisions of the Kaian host,
And gave one to the warrior Nastúr
Of glorious birth—the lustre of the troops ;
The second—all Íránian warriors
And chieftains—he entrusted to his brother,
And kept the third beneath his own command,
Whose voice was as it were a thundering cloud.
Nastúr of stainless birth, the exalted chief,
And Núsh Ázar, the valiant paladin,
Both bound themselves together solemnly :—
“ Although the foeman's sword shall cleave the earth
We will not come back from the fight alive,
And let those miscreants escape our grasp.”

V. 1537

When they had spoken thus and made secure
Their saddle-girths they went forth to the battle.
Now, as they urged their chargers from the lines,
The heroes and the young men of Írán
All came on too and decked the world with mail.
They slew so many horsemen that they cramped
The battlefield. The mill-wheels turned in blood
That streamed from hill and plain. Arjásf, beholding,
Advanced with his own chiefs and warriors.
Asfandiyár, the hero-slayer, couched
His lance against those dívs of Turkman race,

And sewed them breast to back till he had slain
 Full many a haughty chief. Although the Khán
 Saw none to aid, and none who dared oppose
 V. 1538 Asfandiyár, but that his troops withdrew
 Demoralised, he kept his post till eve
 Amid the rout, then fled toward the waste.
 The Íránians pressed the countless troops of Chín,
 And slaughtered them in numbers everywhere,
 For, strange to tell ! not one showed pity there !

§ 19

How the Turkmen received Quarter from Asfandiyár

The Turkman troops saw that Arjásp had fled,
 That swords were flashing on all sides of them,
 And all the chiefs, alighting from their steeds,
 Came to the presence of Asfandiyár,
 The hero, flung away their Turkman bows,
 And doffed their mail. They said to him in anguish :—
 “ If now the prince will give his servants quarter
 We will accept his Faith, will seek instruction
 Therein, and all do worship to the Fires.”

The Íránian soldiery regarded not
 Their words and smote and slaughtered till the world
 Shone with their blood, but when Asfandiyár
 Had heard the Turkmen's cries he granted quarter
 For life and limb. That elephantine hero,
 That princely scion of the royal race,
 Made proclamation to his glorious host :—
 “ Íránian nobles ! spare the men of Chín.
 Now that our enemies have been o'erthrown
 Restrain your hands from further massacre.
 Give these dogs quarter, for they have enough
 V. 1539 Of anguish, scorn, and strait, make no more prisoners,
 Put none in bonds, and let all bloodshed cease ;

Charge not, nor trample on the slain. Go round
And reckon up the wounded. By Zarír's soul,
Make no more prisoners, and tarry not
For long upon your battle-steeds."

The troops,

On hearing what their leader said to them,
Gave themselves up to tendering the wounded.
They went back to their camp, beat kettledrums,
Because they had returned victorious,
And all that night slept not for joy, for Rustam
Himself might own to such a victory. .
When night had passed away, and blood still ran
On wilderness and waste, the famous Kaian,
Escorted by the captains of the host,
Went forth to look upon the battlefield.
He wandered midst the slaughtered, shedding tears
O'er any known to him, but when he saw
His brother's corpse flung vilely on the field
He rent the royal raiment that he wore
And, lighting from his glossy steed Shúlak,
Clutched at his beard with both his hands, and cried :—
" Prince of the warriors of Balkh ! by thee
My whole life hath been turned to bitterness.
Alack ! O gracious form ! O chief ! O prince !
O warlike cavalier ! O chosen hero—
My column and the curtain of the realm,
The Kaian lustre and the army's crown !"

He came near, raised the body from the dust,
And with his own hands wiped the dead man's face ;
Then placed the body on a golden bier :
Zarír, thou wouldst have said, had ne'er been born.
The Íránian nobles and his own young kinsmen
He laid upon their biers, and gave command
To count the slain and carry off the wounded.
They searched the battlefield, the plains, and moun-
tains,

V. 1540 The waste and ways. Of soldiers of Irán
 Were thirty thousand slain ; of men of name
 Eleven hundred and three score and six ;
 One thousand and two score of name were wounded,
 And 'scaped the trampling of the elephants.
 A hundred thousand of the enemy
 Were slain, eight hundred of them chiefs and nobles ;
 The wounded were three thousand and ten score.
 Shun, if thou canst, such ill scenes evermore.

§ 20

How Gushtásp returned to Balkh

The famous Kaian, the triumphant Sháh,
 Went from the battlefield toward his throne,
 And bade Nastúr: "Tomorrow at the dawn
 Conduct the army toward our glorious realm."

That chosen chieftain had the tymbals sounded
 At daybreak, and the army packed the baggage.
 They turned back to the country of Írán,
 Stout-hearted and prepared to fight again.
 They passed by no one either killed or wounded,
 But bore the wounded to Írán and gave them
 To skilful leeches. Now on his return
 The monarch of the world bestowed Humái,
 His glorious daughter, on his eldest son,¹
 And gave illustrious Nastúr the host,
 According to the usage of the Persians,
 Gave him ten thousand of that noble race,
 World-questing horsemen, wielders of the lance,
 Gave him command, and said: "O gallant spearman!
 Go forth against the monarch of the Turkmans,
 Pass through Áyás and through Khallukh, and slay
 All that thou takest to avenge thy sire."

¹ *I e* Asfandiyár. *Cf.* p 22.

The Sháh supplied whate'er Nastúr required,
Not taking either count or reckoning,
And thereupon Nastúr led forth the host,
While Sháh Gushtásp sat on his throne and state,
And, placing on his head the Kaian crown,
Gave audience unto all the host. He opened
His treasury and decked the troops with wealth,
Gave cities to the chieftains, sovereignties
And dignities to those deserving them ;
He passed none over, gave to each his due,
And after that dismissed them to their homes.
Then mounting on his throne for secret conclave,
And sitting on the seat of king of kings,
He bade inaugurate a Fane of Fire,
And use for fuel Indian aloë-wood.
They made the floor thereof pure gold throughout ;
The dust was ambergris, the fuel aloë.
He fashioned all by rules of art, he called
The place "The Mansion of Gushtásp," and made
Jámásp its archmage. To his governors
He wrote : "The Lord hath not abandoned us,
For He hath turned our night's gross murk to day,
And given us conquest to our full content.
Arjásp was shamed, we triumphed. Who can know
To do this save the Maker of the world ?
On hearing of the victory of your Sháh
Present your tribute to the priests of Fire."

When Cæsar, King of Rúm, received the news :—
"The Sháh hath conquered and Arjásp is worsted,"
He sent an embassy with precious gifts
Of slave-boys and of steeds caparisoned ;
The king of Barbaristán and kings of Hind
Sent tribute too as did the kings of Sind.

§ 21

*How Gushtásp sent Asfandiyár to all the Provinces, and
how the Folk received from him the good Religion*

V. 1542 One day the illustrious and fair-fortuned hero,
When seated on the glorious Kaian throne,
Gave audience to the elect of all his realm,
The magnates, and the princes of birth royal.
Asfandiyár, the hero, came before
The presence, ox-head mace in hand and wearing
A Kaian casque above that shining moon,
His face. He stood before the presence, slave-like,
With head depressed and folded arms. Gushtásp
Saw and esteemed his face o'er life and world,
And smiling said: "O brave Asfandiyár!
Dost thou not long for fight?"

That gallant swordsman
Replied: "'Tis thine to bid because thou hast
The kingship and the world."

The famous Kaian
Gave him a golden crown, unlocked for him
The treasures, and committed to his charge
The conduct of Írán, because he had
The might of paladins, gave standard, wealth,
And host, and said: "Thy season for the throne
Is not yet. Mount thy saddle and convert
All nations to the Faith."

The Sháh's son went—
A hero-slaying swordsman—with his host
To all the nations. Over Rúm he passed,
And Hindústán, passed ocean and the Gloom,
V 1543 And published the evangel by command
Of God, the All-provider. When folk learned
About the good Faith they received its rites,
Adorned themselves therewith, and sought instruction.

They burned the idols on their thrones, they kindled
The Fire in stead thereof, and all dispatched
This letter to the Sháh: "We have accepted
The Faith delivered by Asfandiyár,
And donned the girdle.¹ He hath ordered all
Thou shouldst not now ask tribute of us, we
Have been converted and profess the Faith.
Send us the Zandavasta of Zarduhsht."

When he had read the letter of the kings
He sat upon his throne and called his peers.
He sent the Zandavasta to each clime,
To every man of name and every chief,
And ordered that the famous paladin
Should go to all four quarters of the world.
Now no one, wheresoe'er that prince appeared
Dared to go forth to meet him in the fight,
But all folk placed themselves at his command,
While evil-doers vanished utterly.
Asfandiyár, when all had recognised
His sire, loosed from his loins the golden girdle,
Sat like a monarch on the royal seat,
And for a season rested with his host,
But called to him his brother Farshíward
And, having summoned troops and warriors,
Bestowed on him dínárs and drachms in plenty,
Gave Khurásán to him and so dismissed him.
Now when a while had passed, and when the world
Had grown all pure and convert to the Faith,
Asfandiyár thus advertised his sire,
And said: "Illustrious and victorious Sháh!
By God's Grace I have purged the world, and spread
The shadow of the eagle through the climes,
Moreover men no longer fear each other,
And no one is in lack of gold and silver.
The world hath grown as bright as Paradise

V. 1544

¹ See p. 16.

And populous, and all the fields are tilled ;
 Our cavaliers have made it all their own,
 The husbandmen are at their husbandry."

The world wagged on awhile with matters thus,
 And evil was no longer obvious.

§ 22

How Gurazm spake Evil of Asfandiyár

Mine author saith that when the Sháh bestowed
 A royal crown upon Asfandiyár
 There was a certain noble hight Gurazm,
 A famous war-worn warrior, who cherished
 A secret enmity against the prince.
 I know not why it was, but I have heard
 That this man was a kinsman of Gushtásp's,
 And always ill-disposed toward his son,¹
 And, when that prince's fame was noised abroad,
 Was wont to slander and belittle him.

Once at the dawn of day the famous Sháh,
 While sitting in the banquet-hall at ease,
 Gave audience to the chosen of his host,
 The magnates, kings, and others of high birth,
 V. 1545 Gurazm sat, his visage passion-pale
 And heart all black with hate, before the Sháh,
 The glorious one. Now mark the villain's conduct
 What time the converse turned upon the prince,
 For thereupon he wrung his hands, and cried :—
 "A wicked son is like an enemy,
 And, being such, should win advancement never.
 An archimage, a holy man, hath told us —
 'A puissant son, if he becometh great,
 Will alter for the worse his sire's estate,
 A slave that is disloyal to his lord
 Should be beheaded as his just reward.'"

¹ Cf. p 12.

Gushtásp asked what the riddler meant, and said :—
 “What is this riddle? Who doth know the answer?”

The slanderous Kaian said : “’Twere indiscreet
 To tell it now.”

The great king cleared the hall,
 And said to that deceiver: “Come to me,
 Reveal the whole to me and what my son,
 That man of serpent faith, concealeth from me.”

Gurazm, the ill-disposed, made answer thus :—
 “To do the right thing is the part of wisdom.
 The Sháh hath satisfied mine every wish,
 And I must keep no secrets from the Sháh.
 I will not keep my counsel back from him,
 E’en though it proveth unacceptable,
 I will in no wise keep it from my lord,
 Though he should let me never speak again,
 Because for me to speak, although he hear not,
 Is better than to hide from him the secret.
 Know then, O world-lord! that Asfandiyár
 Is clearly bent on battle, troops have flocked
 In multitudes, and all men turned, to him.
 His purpose is to put thee into bonds;
 He cannot bear that thou shouldst be the Sháh,
 And, when he hath laid hands on thee and bound
 thee,

V. 1546

Will make the whole world subject to himself.
 Thou knowest that Asfandiyár is one
 That hath no peer in battle, and when he
 Hath coiled his lasso up the sun itself
 Will not dare meet him. I have told thee truly
 What I have heard; so now be well-advised,
 To counsel and take action are for thee.”

Now when Gurazm spake thus before the Sháh
 That famous warrior was all astound,
 And said: “Whoever saw a thing so monstrous?”

In dudgeon he began to hate his son;

He quaffed no wine withal, forwent his pleasures,
 Refused the feast, and heaved deep, chilling sighs;
 He could not sleep for thinking all that night,
 Possessed by wrath against Asfandiyár.
 As soon as dawn breathed from the mountain-tops,
 And starlight disappeared, he called to him
 Jámásp, that man of much experience,
 His minister in chief, and said: "Approach
 Asfandiyár, call him forthwith, conduct him
 To me, and say: 'A great affair is toward,
 And therefore come, O leader of the realm!
 Thy presence is required, and for my part,
 When thou art absent, nothing prospereth.'"

He wrote an urgent letter in these words:—

"O noble, glorious Asfandiyár!
 I have dispatched the old Jámásp to thee,
 Who can remember to have seen Luhrásp.
 When thou beholdest him gird up thy loins,
 And come with him upon swift-footed steeds.
 If thou art lying down spring to thy feet,
 And if thou shalt be standing tarry not."

Charged with the letter of the Shah in haste
 That wise man crossed the hills and trod the waste.

§ 23

How Jámásp came to Asfandiyár

- V 1547 Asfandiyár was in the desert hunting
 When some one shouted that the Sháh had sent
 Jámásp. He mused and laughed uneasily.
 He had four noble sons, all fair of face
 And doughty cavaliers, the eldest hight
 Bahman,¹ the second Mihr-i-Núsh, the third

¹ The future Sháh.

Ázar Afrúz—a wary warrior—

The youngest Núsh Ázar, 'twas he that built
The Fane of Fire Bahman said to his father,
That king of earth: "May thy head flourish ever!
My lord was laughing with a hollow laugh,
I know not why."

Asfandiyár replied:—

"My son! one cometh to me from the Sháh,
Who is displeased with me and hath some grudge
Against his slave."

The noble youth said: "Why?

What hast thou done against our sovereign lord?"

Asfandiyár made answer: "O my son!

I know of no offence against my father,
Unless it is that I have taught the Faith,
Have lighted sacred Fires throughout the world,
And purified it with my trenchant sword.
What can have made the Sháh's heart wroth with me?
In sooth the Dív must have seduced his heart,
For he is mad enough to wish to bind me!"

Now while Asfandiyár was thus engaged
The dust of the advancing troops appeared.
He saw it from the mountain-top afar
And, knowing that the messenger had come,
Went forth at once to meet him. When they spied V. 1548
Each other on the way they both alighted
Down from their prancing steeds, and warrior
And elder fared afoot. The glorious
Asfandiyár inquired: "How is the Sháh,
That hero-king?"

The sage Jámásp made answer:—

"He is both well and happy."

Then he kissed

The prince upon the head and gave the letter,
Informing him with frankness of the case,
And saying: "The Dív hath led the Sháh astray."

Asfandiyár said to that man of wisdom :—
 “ What seemeth to thee best for me herein ?
 If I set out with thee to go to court
 My father will entreat me scurvily,
 And if I go not with his officer
 I shall no longer be a loyal liege.
 Devise some remedy, thou ancient sage !
 I may not rest in this bewilderment.”

The sage replied : “ O prince of paladins,
 So young in body and so old in knowledge !
 Thou knowest that the best love of a son
 Is not so tender as a father's wrath.
 Thou must set forward, that is mine advice,
 For, whatsoe'er he doth, he is the Sháh.”

This they agreed upon and went their ways,
 The messenger and the exalted prince,
 Who made Jámásp alight when they had reached
 A goodly seat whereafter both drank wine.
 Next day Asfandiyár sat on his throne
 And, when he had brought forth the muster-roll,
 Entrusted all the army to Bahman,
 And setting forth with certain warriors,
 His girdle girt, his crown upon his head,
 Back to the court-gate of the great Sháh sped.

§ 24

How Gushtásp imprisoned Asfandiyár

The Sháh on hearing that Asfandiyár,
 His son, had come, crowned with the Kaian casque,
 V 1549 Called to his presence high and low alike,
 And spread the Zandavasta out before him.
 He seated all the archmages and then summoned
 The royal swordsman. With extended hands
 The hero came, approached the presence, did

Obeisance, and stood slave-like with bent head
And folded arms. The king of kings addressed
The archmages, chiefs, and leaders of the host.
"Suppose," he said, "that any noble man
Shall rear a son with pains, provide him nurses
While needing suckling, crown him with a crown
Of gold, and guard him till he waxeth lusty,
Teach him till he becometh venturesome,
And undergo no little pains to make
That son a cavalier expert in war,
Suppose that noble youth attaineth manhood,
And is as bright as new gold from the mine,
That all that seek for favours ask of him,
And that he is the theme of every speaker,
Shall prove a good, victorious cavalier,
And foremost when folk meet for fight or feast,
Shall place the whole world underneath his feet,
And well deserve the royal diadem,
Shall, when victorious, spread forth limbs and boughs,
The while his father, then grown old, shall sit
Within his palace, keeping but one crown
And throne, and stay at home to mind the goods;
Suppose that son with world and flag and host
Shall grudge his sire e'en one gold crown and throne!
Hath any of you heard of such a thing
As that the son for that one throne and crown
Should purpose to cut off his father's head,
Should make an insurrection with his troops,
And whet his heart to fight against his sire?
What say ye, ancient men? What is the course
The father well may take with such a son?"

The chosen chiefs replied: "O monarch! never
Have we to take account of such a case—
The father living and the son attempting
His throne! Call nothing more preposterous."

The world-lord answered: "Here there is a son

Who hath designs upon his father's life.
Him will I bind as well he hath deserved,
And on such wise as none hath bound another."

The son exclaimed: "O Sháh of noble race'
How ever could I hanker for thy death?
I do not know, O Sháh! of any wrong
That I have done to thee at any time.
By thine own life, imperious sovereign!
When ever did I harbour such designs?
But thou art Sháh, 'tis thine to order, I
Am thine, and bonds and prison rest with thee.
Bid them to bind or slay me as thou wilt;
My heart is honest and my mind submiss"

The king of kings exclaimed: "Bring hither chains,
Bind him, and falter not."

They brought in blacksmiths,
Yoke, chains, and heavy shackles, and then bound him,
Both hand and foot, before the king, the world-lord,
So straitly fettered him that all beholding
Wept bitterly. They brought an elephant,
Like indigo, and set Asfandiyár
Thereon. They bare him from his glorious sire,
With dust upon his head, to Gumbadán,
That stronghold on the mountain-top, conveyed
V. 1551 Four iron columns thither and there bound him
With rigour. They dethroned him; fortune changed.
The Sháh set many to keep guard upon him,
While seared and sore that gallant paladin
Lived for a space in straitest custody,
And ever and anon wept bitterly.

§ 25

*How Gushtásp went to Sístán and how Arjásp arrayed
his Host the second Time*

Thus many days passed o'er Asfandiyár,
The while Gushtásp departed to Sístán
To make the Zandavasta current there,
And archimages testify thereto.
As soon as the illustrious Sháh arrived
There went to him the captain of the host,
The ruler of Nímruz, whose name was Rustam,
A veteran cavalier, another Sám,
In company with agèd Zál, his sire,
With mighty men and those about the court.
They carried minstrels in their train withal,
And posted them with harps along the route
Thus went they forth to greet the glorious Sháh
Right jubilantly, and it liked him well.
They brought him to Zábul to be their guest,
And stood before his presence as his slaves.
From him they learned about the Zandavasta,
Adopted it, and lighted sacred Fires.
Two years passed thus in hospitality;
Gushtásp kept feasting with the son of Zál.
Throughout the world, wherever there were kings
That heard about the doings of the Sháh :—
"He hath confined Asfandiyár in bonds,
Hath galled his elephantine form with iron,
And gone to preach the gospel in Zábul
To blast the idols with the Cult of Fire,"
They one and all refused to do his bidding,
And brake with him completely.

When Bahman
Heard that his sire was prisoned by the Sháh,
And for no fault, Asfandiyár's brave meiny

Came grieving to him with the Kaian princes,
 Fulfilled with tribulation and dismay,
 And raised his spirits with their minstrelsy,
 Not letting him be lonesome in his prison.
 Then tidings reached the king of Chín: "The Moon
 Hath fallen from the Archer into ambush.
 The Sháh, wroth with Asfandiyár, dispatched him,
 Dishonoured, to the hold of Gumbadán,
 And started for Zábulistán himself
 From Balkh to stay with Rustam, son of Zál,
 Whose guest he now is at Zábul, and thus
 Two years have passed away. Of all the Íránians
 And soldiery none, saving Sháh Luhrásp
 With seven hundred devotees of Fire,
 Is left at Balkh."

The monarch of Chigil
 Called out his chiefs and heartened them to fall
 Upon Luhrásp. "Know ye," 'twas thus he spake,
 "That Sháh Gushtásp hath marched with all his host
 Sístán-ward and abideth at Zábul:
 No cavalier is left in all his realm.
 Now is the time for us to seek revenge;
 We must take order and prepare ourselves.
 His son, illustrious Asfandiyár,
 V. 1553 Is fast in heavy bonds. What man is there—
 A searcher out of mysteries—prepared
 To undertake the long and arduous road,
 And, choosing bypaths, shunning public ways,
 Obtain full tidings of the Íránians?"

There was a sorcerer, by name Sitúh,
 A rover and explorer. "I," he said,
 "Am one of tact and used to travelling.
 What shall I do? Command me as thou wilt."

The king of Chín said: "Go thou to Írán,
 Take heedful note, and roam through all the land."
 The spy set forth upon his way and went

To chosen Balkh, the dwelling of the Sháh.
 He saw not Sháh Gushtásp therein but found
 Luhrásp, the devotee; he thereupon
 Returned and, having done the Khán obeisance,
 Told all. Arjásp grew joyful at the news,
 And freed from longsome care, called all his chiefs,
 And said: "Go, muster our disbanded host."

The chieftains of the army went their way
 To mountains, desert-tracts, and pasture-lands,
 And summoned to the king his soldiery,
 The chosen horsemen of his sovereignty.

§ 26

*The Words of Dakíkí being ended, Firdausí resumeth,
 praising Sháh Mahmúd and criticising Dakíkí*

Now, man of eloquence and shrewd! again
 Take up the story in thy proper strain.
 Dakíkí to this point had brought his lay
 When fortune put a period to his day,
 And, having dealt with him right grievously,
 Bare off his spirit from this Hostelry,
 So that these fleeting words of his are all
 That now remain as his memorial.
 He stayed not to complete the tale, he penned
 It not from its beginning to its end.
 Now give attention to Firdausí's part,
 Whose words are chaste and pleasing to the heart.
 What time within my hands this story fell
 My hook was angling for the fish as well.¹
 I scanned the verses and esteemed them weak;
 In many couplets there was much to seek,
 But here have I transcribed them that the king
 May know how inartistic verses ring.

V. 1554

¹ "Lorsque ce livre tomba entre mes mains, il me manquait un mois pour avoir soixante ans" (Mohl).

Both jewellers have each a gem to sell ;
 Now let the Sháh give ear to what they tell.
 If thou canst speak but in Dakíki's vein
 Speak not at all and spare thy nature pain,
 And, mindful of the bondage and the toil,
 Ne'er dig in mines whence thou wilt win no spoil.
 Unless thou art as fluent as a stream
 Lay not thy hand upon this royal theme ,
 'Tis better that all food should be abjured
 Than that thou shouldest spread a tasteless board.

A book fulfilled with legends met my view,
 Its words possessed of character and true,
 Its stories very ancient and in prose ;
 The wits had never thought of rhyming those,
 No one had thought of linking line to line—
 A fact that struck this gladsome heart of mine.
 Two thousand years had passed the story o'er,
 Two thousand years and haply countless more,
 V. 1555 And I began his praises to rehearse,
 Who showed the way to turn it into verse.
 Although he only rhymed the veriest mite—
 One thousand couplets full of feast and fight—
 He was my pioneer and he alone,
 In that he set the Sháhs upon the throne.
 From nobles honour and emolument
 Had he, his trouble was his own ill bent.
 To sing the praises of the kings was his,
 And crown the princes with his eulogies,
 But still he uttered but a feeble strain,
 And eld through him could ne'er grow young again.
 I took the story for a lucky-sign ,
 For many a year the travail was all mine,
 Yet found I no great patron of mine own
 To shed a lustre on the royal throne—
 A matter of much discontent to me,
 But silence was the only remedy.

I had before mine eyes a garth of trees,
 A dwelling-place for such as live at ease,
 But not a portal opened on that same,
 Save only what was royal but in name.
 Fit for my garden must the portal be,
 One that was narrow would not do for me.
 For twenty years I kept my work till I
 Should find one worthy of my treasury,
 Until Mahmúd, the master of the earth,
 Endowed with Grace and bounty, he whose worth
 Both Moon and Saturn praise (Abú'l Kásim !
 The crown of king of kings is fresh through him),
 Till he, the world-lord, came and sat him here
 Upon the throne of justice. Find his peer.
 His name hath crowned my work, his Grace divine
 Like ivory made this darkened heart of mine.
 He passeth all the Sháhs that went before,
 And counteth not as ill the breath of yore.
 Dínárs to him are dust, and him dismay
 Betideth not in festival and fray,
 For he from one that seeketh doth withhold
 Not sword in war-time nor at feast-time gold.
 May his throne flourish ever and still be
 The rapture of the spirits of the free !

V. 1556

§ 27

*How the Host of ArjásP marched to Balkh and how
 LuhrásP was slain*

Now will we tell the warfare of ArjásP
 Afresh and by our insight clear the garth
 Of weeds :—ArjásP had tidings that the Sháh
 Had set forth with his host toward Sístán,
 And gave commandment that Kuhram, the swordsman,
 Should lead the troops before him, for Kuhram

Was eldest-born to him and raised his head
 O'er radiant Sol. Arjásþ said : " Choose thee horsemen
 War-worthy from the host and haste to Balkh,
 Which hath embittered and o'ercast our days.
 Those of our foes, those worshippers of Fire,
 Those Áhrimans, whom thou shalt take, behead,
 Burn up their homes, and turn their day to night.
 Smoke from the palace of Gushtásþ must rise
 And lick the azure sky. If thou shalt find
 Asfandiyár with fetters on his feet
 Put thou an end to him ; part instantly
 His body and his head, and make the world
 Re-echo with thy name. Throughout Írán
 The cities have been left at thy disposal,
 The foe—the scabbard—left for thee—the sword.
 I shall not loiter in Khallukh but follow
 Apace, recall our scattered troops, and lavish
 My hoarded wealth."

Kuhram replied : " Thy bidding
 Will I perform and pledge my life thereto."

V. 1557 When from its waist the sun drew forth its sword,
 And darksome night drew back its skirts therefrom,
 There gathered five score thousand of Khallukh
 About Arjásþ—choice cavaliers and swordsmen.
 Kuhram led forth the army to Írán,
 While earth grew like an Ethiop's face for gloom,
 And coming to those marches spread his hands,
 And overthrew whome'er he saw. The Turkmans
 Had set their hearts on vengeance, were prepared
 To pillage and to slay, and as they drew
 Anear to Balkh spake much, and bitterly.
 Luhrásþ heard of Kuhram, was grieved, and fared
 With travail. Thus he prayed : " Omnipotent !
 Thou art supreme o'er time's vicissitudes,
 Thou art almighty, wise, and merciful,
 The Master of the shining sun. Preserve

My Faith, my person, and mine energies,
My watchful heart and intellect withal,
So that I may not perish in their hands
A thrall, or in dismay cry out for succour "

There was no chief or mace-armed cavalier
At Balkh. A thousand came from the bázár,
But all unfit for war. Luhrásp assumed
His mail what time the Turkman host drew nigh,
He left the oratory for the field,
And donned the Kaian casque. Old as he was
He roared out like a maddened elephant,
Bare in his hand an ox-head mace, and dashed
To earth therewith a warlock of the chiefs
At every charge till all folks said: "This noble
Is dealing buffets like Asfandiyár!"
Where'er he spurred he mingled dust with blood;
The galls were split of all that heard his voice.
Kuhram said to the Turkmen: "Fight no longer
Against him single-handed, strive amain,
Surround him, and roar out like mighty lions."

V. 1558

Arose the crash of bills, the shouts of horsemen
All eager to monopolize the fray,
Whereat Luhrásp, abandoned midst the foe,
Invoked in his resourcelessness God's name,
For old age and the burning of the sun
Oppressed him, and his fortune went to sleep.
That veteran, that worshipper of God,
Fell headlong, smitten by the Turkmen's arrows;
The head that wore the crown came to the dust.
Then many cavaliers surrounded him,
They hacked his Kaian harness into bits,
His body piecemeal with their scimitars.
They took him for a youthful cavalier,
But when they raised the helmet from his head,
And saw his ruddy cheek, his camphor hair,
And heavenly visage livid now with iron,

All marvelled at the miracle, exclaiming :—
 “To think that one so old should sword it thus !
 Had but Asfandiyár himself come hither
 Our host would have been busy on this plain !
 Why have we come here with such puny powers,
 For we have come but as a flock to pasture ?”

Then to his comrades said Kuhram : “The toil
 And travail in the fight was due to this,
 That he who wore the crown was Sháh Luhrásp—
 Sire of Gushtásp, the master of the world.
 As king of kings he had the Grace of God,
 And passed his life in feasting and the field,
 But in old age became a devotee,
 And plucked his heart away from crown and throne.
 Now will Gushtásp, whose throne is thus bereaved,
 Quail for the diadem of king of kings.”

V. 1559 The host reached Balkh, the world was wrecked with
 sack

And slaughter. Making for the Fane of Fire,¹
 For hall and palace decked with gold, they gave
 Them and the Zandavasta to the flames.
 The fane had eighty priests, God's worshippers,
 And all before the Fire the Turkmans slew,
 And swept that cult away. The Fire, that erst
 Zarduhsht had litten, of their blood did die ;
 Who slew that priest himself I know not I.²

¹ Núsh Azar. See p. 93.

² Reading with P. Cf. p. 15. Zarduhsht is said to have been seventy-seven at the time of his death on the day Khurshíd of the month Ardíbihisht, i.e. on May 1, 583 B.C. WPT, v. 165, and xxx.

§ 28

*How Gushtásp heard of the Slaying of Luhrásp and
led his Army toward Balkh*

Gushtásp possessed a wife—a prudent dame,
Wise, understanding, and high-minded. She,
When she had dight herself in Turkman guise,
And mounted on a fleet steed from the stable,
Departed from the palace and set forth,
Aghast at what had happened, toward Sístán.
She tarried not to sleep at any stage,
And ran a two-days' journey into one.
Thus she continued till she reached Gushtásp
In grief with tidings of Luhrásp, and said:—
“Why hast thou tarried this long while and why
Didst thou depart from famous Balkh at all?
An army from Túrán hath reached the city,
And turned its people's day to bitterness.
All Balkh is full of sack and massacre;
Thou must return forthwith.”

Gushtásp replied —

“What grief is this? Why mourn a single raid?
When I march forth all Chín will not withstand me.”

She answered thus: “Talk not so foolishly;
Things of great charge confront us now. The Turkmans
Have slain at Balkh Luhrásp, the king of kings,
And turned our days to gloom and bitterness,
Proceeded thence to Núsh Ázar and there
Beheaded both Zarduhsht and all the archmages,
Quenched in whose blood the radiant Fire expired,
An outrage not to be accounted lightly.
Thereafter they led off thy daughters captive;
Take not so grave a matter easily.
If there were nothing but Humái's dishonour
'Twould stir a sage's heart, and furthermore

There is thine other daughter, Bih Áfríd,
 Till then kept hidden from a breath of air,
 Whom they have taken from her golden throne,
 And plundered of her bracelets and her crown "

Gushtásp, on hearing this, was filled with anguish,
 And showered from his eyelids gall of blood.
 He called to him the great men of Írán,
 And told before them all that he had heard,
 Called for a scribe, put by his crown, avoided
 His throne, sent cavaliers to every side
 With letters to his paladins, and said :—
 "Wash not your heads from soil, distinguish not
 'Twixt up and down, and come ye all to court
 In armour and with mace and Rúman casque."

They bore the letter to each paladin
 That was a mighty man within the realm,
 And, when from all the Sháh's realm there had gathered
 The troops and valiant horsemen of his host,
 He gave out pay and, marching from Sístán,
 Proceeded on his road toward famous Balkh.

V 1561 Arjásp, on hearing that Gushtásp, the world-lord,
 Had come with army and with crown and throne,
 Assembled from Túran so vast a host
 That sun and moon were darkened with the dust.
 From sea to sea that host extended, none
 Could see the surface of the waste for troops,
 And when the dust-clouds of the armies met
 The earth grew dark and heaven azure-dim.
 The opposing hosts drew up for battle, armed
 With spears and swords and double-headed darts.
 Upon the Íránian right prince Farshíward
 Was posted—one that challenged rending lions ;
 Upon the left the warrior Nastúr,
 Son of Zarír—the chief, while at the centre
 Gushtásp, the world-lord, overlooked his powers.
 Kundur was stationed on the Turkman right

With infantry behind him with the baggage,
Kuhram, the swordsman, on the left, Arjasp
Was at the centre with the main. The din
Of trump and drum ascended from both hosts,
Earth turned to iron, air to ebony.
Thou wouldst have said: "The heavens flee away,
And earth is cracking underneath the weight!"
The heights of flint bowed at the chargers' neighs
And crash of axes, all the waste was full
Of heads laid trunkless in the dust and battered
By massive maces; swords flashed; arrows rained;
The heroes shouted in the fray; the stars
Sought flight, the troops grew prodigal of life;
Shafts fell around like hail, the wilderness
Was all a-groan with wounded trampled down
In multitudes beneath the horses' hoofs,
The lion's maw their shroud and blood their bier,
The trunks were headless and the heads were trunkless,
The horsemen were like elephants a-foam,
And fathers had no time to mourn for sons.

V. 1562

Thus for three days and nights the heavens revolved,
All onslaught and reprisal, war and strife,
The moon's face reddened with the splash of blood,
Such was that battlefield! Then lion-like
Strove Farshidward against Kuhram, the swordsman,
And was so sorely stricken that the life
Passed from his lion-body. Multitudes
Were slain amidst the Íránians, the land
Was wet with warriors' blood. Now Sháh Gushtásp
Had eight and thirty sons, bold mountaineers
And horsemen on the plain; all were laid low,
The Sháh's good fortune darkened at a blow.

§ 29

How Gushtásp was put to Flight by Arjásp

At length Gushtásp, when fortune had become
 So ruggèd, showed his back. The enemy
 Pursued him for two stages and were instant
 To take him captive. In the way before him
 There lay a mountain full of pasturage,
 Wherein there were a mill-stream and a mill,
 And having in its whole circumference
 But one sole path: thereof Gushtásp was ware,
 V 1563 And heart-seared scaled the mountain with his troops,
 But left a force upon the road behind him.

Arjásp, arriving with his host, went round
 The mountain, but discovered not the path.
 On all sides they laid leaguer. When the Sháh,
 That noble man, was left without resource
 His troops lit fires upon the mountain-top,
 And burnt thorns on the flints,¹ each leader slew
 A steed and pondered on his helpless plight.

The proud Sháh, compassed thus, was sore dismayed,
 And called to him Jámásp, the veteran,
 Held talk at large about the stars, and said:—
 “Declare whate’er thou knowest of heaven’s will,
 And wait not to be asked. Thou needs must tell
 Who is to succour me in this distress.”

Jámásp, on hearing, rose and said: “Just king!
 If now the Sháh will hearken to my words,
 Confiding in the process of the stars,
 I will discover to him what I know
 If he will recognise my truthfulness.”

The Sháh replied: “Whatever secret thing

¹ There is a play of words in the original between khár (thorns) and khárá (flint).

Thou knowest, tell it to me and be brief,
My head may touch the clouds, but heaven's changes
I cannot 'scape."

Jámásp replied : " O Sháh !
List to my words and let me have thine ear.
Asfandiyár, the glorious, by thy bidding
Is wearing chains in this his evil day.
If he were set at liberty the Sháh
Would not be left on this high mountain-top "

Gushtásp replied : " O trusty counsellor,
Who art a man of truth and of resource !
When in my wrath I put him into bonds—
The heavy chains by blacksmiths riveted—
I was remorseful all the time and sought
With aching heart to find a remedy
For having bound him in the audience,
Though he was guiltless, at his foeman's charge.
I, if I see him on this day of battle,
Will give him crown and throne and signet-ring ;
But who will dare to go to that beloved one,
And free the innocent ? "

V. 1564

Jámásp said : " I
Will go, O king ! because the case is urgent."

Gushtásp rejoined : " O thou fulfilled with wisdom !
Thy virtues are as music to my soul,
Depart forthwith by night, greet him at large
From me, and say : ' The man that did the wrong
Hath left this world with anguish in his heart,
While I, who acted as that little-wit
Desired, repent that I have done amiss,
And will prepare a goodly recompense.
Now if thou wilt put vengeance from thy heart,
And shalt bring down our foemen's heads to dust,
For else the realm and throne have reached their end,
And foemen will uproot the Kaian Tree,
On thee, if thou shalt come, I will bestow

Crown, treasure, and whate'er I have amassed
 By toil, and will devote myself to prayer
 Thenceforth as did my sire Luhrásp, the world-lord.
 God is my witness to these words of mine,
 As is Jámásp who is my counsellor.' "

Jámásp attired him in Túránian mail,
 And came down from the heights without a guide.
 V. 1565 Whenas that man of wisdom reached the plain
 He passed the army of the foe by night ;
 To Gumbadán, the hold, he made his way,
 Preserved from ill hands and his evil day.

§ 30

How Jámásp visited Asfandiyár

One of Asfandiyár's exalted sons,
 Whom he named Núsh Ázar, was on the ramparts
 To see who came forth from the Íránian host,
 And advertise his sire. At sight of any
 He used to hurry from the walls forthwith.
 When he perceived Jámásp upon his way,
 And on his head a fair Túránian helm,
 He said : " A horseman from Túrán hath come :
 I will descend and tell Asfandiyár."

He hastened downward from the castle-rampart,
 And spake on this wise : " Noble paladin !
 I see a horseman coming in the distance,
 And on his head there is a sable helm.
 I will go see if he is from Gushtásp,
 Or from Arjásp, a foe. If he shall prove
 A Turkman then will I cut off his head,
 And fling his feckless body in the dust."

Said great Asfandiyár. " The traveller,
 Since he is unattended, is but lowly.
 In sooth he is a warrior from Írán,

And cometh unto us with some dispatch ;
My sire hath put that helmet on his head
In apprehension of our valiant foes."

When Núsh Ázar, the paladin, had heard
He went in haste upon the castle-rampart ;
He recognised Jámásp when close at hand,
Descended, and informed his glorious sire :—
"Jámásp is at the gate."

V. 1566

He had it opened,
The sage came in, did reverence and, coming
Before Asfandiyár, repeated to him
The message of Gushtásp, his sire, in full.

Asfandiyár replied : " O Memory
Of this world's heroes, wise, courageous,
And of exalted rank ! why bow to one
In chains, for one in irons, hand and foot,
Is not of man's seed, but an Áhriman ?
Thou givest me greeting from the king of kings,
So that thy heart is not informed by knowledge,
Since it is for Arjásp to greet me now,
Because the plain is all Iránians' blood.
They bound me innocent. Gurazm forsooth
Must be the Sháh's son, I be fettered thus !
Mine irons are my witnesses to God
That I have had injustice from Gushtásp,
And that Gurazm's words pleased Áhriman.
Such was the recompense of all my toil,
While for my treasury 'tis stocked with irons.
Oh ! may I ne'er forget this injury,
And stultify my wisdom through thy talk."

Jámásp replied : " O speaker of the truth,
World-taker, lion-thrower, bent on fame !
If thou art thus heart-wearied of thy sire
His throne is overturned ; yet for the sake
Of pious Sháh Luhrásp, slain by the Turkmans
In battle, and of those God-fearing priests,

Who had the Zandavasta in their hands,
 Of whom four score were slaughtered—archimages
 And sages pure of heart, quenched in whose blood
 The sacred Fire hath died within the fane—
 Such ill deeds cannot be accounted lightly.

V 1567 Possess thy heart with sorrow for thy grandsire,
 Rise in thy wrath and let thy cheeks be pale,
 For if thou art not stirred up to avenge him
 Thou art not worshipful and well advised."

Asfandiyár made answer to him thus :—
 "O famed, high-starred, heroic, and prevailing !
 Reflect that for the old Luhrásp—that man
 Of piety, the father of Gushtásp—
 The son that sought erewhile his father's throne,
 And his prerogative, will best seek vengeance."

Jámásp replied : "If thou wilt not avenge
 Thy grandsire thou art void of principle.
 The wise Humái and Bih Áfríd, whose faces
 No breath of air had seen, are in Túrán
 As prisoners, all misery and anguish,
 And foot it wan of mien."

Asfandiyár

Thus answered : "Did Humái at any time
 Remember me in my confinement here ?
 And, further, as for noble Bih Áfríd,
 She never looked on me, as thou mightst say !
 Why now should I distress myself for them ?
 No one from them hath ever come to me.
 A father well may see to his own daughters,
 A sire the better undertake for them."

Jámásp replied to him : "O paladin !
 Thy sire, the world-lord, with his soul all gloom,
 Is now upon a mountain with his chiefs,
 With tearful eyes and unfed lips ; the Turkmans
 Beleaguer him ; henceforth thou wilt not see
 His head and crown. The Maker will condemn

Thy disregard of love and Faith. Thy brethren,
 For thou hadst eight and thirty—Mountain-pards,
 And Lions of the plain—all couch in dust
 And brick, because the foe let none escape."

V. 1568

Asfandiyár rejoined: "I used to have
 Full many a noble brother, and while I
 Lay bound they all made merry! No one thought
 Of wretched me! If I take action now
 What profit, seeing that the foe hath raised
 The reek from them?"

Jámásp, on hearing this,
 And noting how the captive's heart was seared,
 Rose to his feet in sorrow and in anger,
 With anxious heart and eyes fulfilled with tears,
 And said to him: "O chief of paladins!
 Although thy heart and mind are darkened thus,
 What sayest thou of the case of Farshídwad,
 Who went so heavily on thine account?
 Where'er he was, at fray or festival,
 He was all pain and curses on Gurazm;
 His body hath been slashed with scimitars,
 Helm and cuirass are cloven, and his soul
 Is breaking with his love for thee! Oh! pity
 His weeping eyes."

When Farshídwad was named
 Asfandiyár wept blood, his heart was grieved,
 He cried: "O wretched, valiant warrior!
 O lion-hearted hero, chieftain, prince!
 I have been wounded by those wounds of thine,
 And I have bathed my cheeks in my heart's blood."

V. 1569

When he became composed he asked Jámásp:—
 "What was thy purpose in concealing this?
 Give orders that some blacksmiths shall be brought,
 And let them file the fetters from my feet."

Jámásp fetched blacksmiths, and they brought with
 them

Their heavy hammers and their files of steel.
 They filed the rings, the rivets, and the chains,
 And all the bridge-like fetters made in Rúm.
 The bonds took long to file; the captive's heart,
 Remiss no longer, grew impatient.
 He said thus to a smith: "Thou awkward lout!
 Thou bindest but thou canst not break the bonds!"

He drew his hands away, arose in dudgeon,
 And, stretching out the chains to their full length,
 Strained with his feet and struggled with his hands,
 And brake in pieces fetter, ring, and chain.
 The breaking of his bonds exhausted him,
 The anguish overcame him and he swooned.
 That reader of the stars who saw the marvel
 Was full of praises of the noble prince.
 Whenas the lusty hero had regained
 His wits he ranged the bonds and chains before him,
 And said: "These presents given by Gurazm
 Have severed me from fight and festival."

V. 1570 With aching body galled and stiff with bondage
 He went off to the bath. He then demanded
 The raiment of a king and therewithal
 The armour of a paladin, and bade:—
 "Bring my fleet charger, helm, and scimitar."

Now when his eye fell on his steed he called
 Upon the Giver of all good, and said:—
 "If I did wrong I have been vexed with bonds,
 But what hath this my prancing Barbary
 Done to be starved? Go groom and feed him up."

He sent for smiths, the prowtest in their trade,
 Who came, repaired his arms, and hauberks made.

§ 31

How Asfandiyár saw his Brother Farshídwár

Night came like vengeful Áhriman, the bells
Clanged at the gate, and Indian sword in hand
Asfandiyár bestrode his royal steed. V. 1571
He with Bahman and noble Núsh Ázar
Went forth on their long journey while Jámásp,
The minister of great Gushtásp, went first
As guide. Now when these warrior-cavaliers
Had come outside the walls, and reached the plain,
Asfandiyár, the chieftain, looked toward heaven,
And said : " O Judge whose words are true ! Thou art
The Maker, the Almighty, and illumest
The spirit of Asfandiyár. If I
Prevail and make the world strait for Arjásp,
Take vengeance on him for Luhrásp, the Sháh,
And for the blood of all those blameless chiefs,
My very eyes—mine eight and thirty brothers,
Whose blood hath dyed the dust upon the plain—
I swear by God, the just Judge, to forego
Revenge upon my father for my bonds,
To build a hundred Fanes of Fire, and weed
The world of tyranny. None shall behold
A carpet 'neath my feet till I have built
A hundred hostels in the wilderness.
In parched wastes that no vulture traverseth,
And where no onager and other game
Set foot, will I have dug ten thousand wells,
And plant their mouths with trees. Out of my treasure
I will bestow a hundred thousand drachms
Upon the poor and every one that asketh.
I will convert the erring to the Faith,
And will lay low the heads of sorcerers,
While in God's presence will I stand and worship ;

None ever shall behold me take mine ease."

He spake thus and urged on his battle-steed
 Until he came to Farshíward, beheld him
 Stretched on the dust in miserable case,
 His prostrate form confounded by its wounds,
 And, pouring from his eyes so many tears
 As filled the wise physician with amazement,
 V. 1572 Exclaimed: "O Lion, seeker of the fray!
 From whom hath this disaster come upon thee?
 On whom shall I avenge thee in the battle,
 On Lion of the fray or Crocodile?"

Thus Farshíward replied: "O paladin!
 It was Gushtásp that wounded me to death.
 Could Turkmans, if he had not fettered thee,
 Have wrought this scath and likewise overthrown
 Luhrásp, the hoary-headed, and all Balkh?
 None ever hath beheld or heard of ills
 Such as Gurazm's words have brought upon us,
 Yet murmur not, accept thy lot, and prove
 A fruitful tree, for I shall pass away,
 But needs must thou abide for evermore.
 Remember me when I have gone, and glad
 My spirit by thy bounty. So farewell,
 Thou chief of paladins! For ever live,
 And be of ardent soul."

He spake and wanned;
 That noble Lion, Farshíward, was gone.
 Asfandiyár clutched at his own cuirass,
 Marred all the painted silk, and cried: "O Lord
 Supreme and holy! lead me to take vengeance
 For Farshíward, to send the dust-clouds flying
 From stones and water, from Arjásp to set
 The blood a-stream, and give Luhrásp's soul peace."
 -- With heart all vengeance and with head distraught
 He laid his brother's corpse upon the saddle,
 Then mounted to the heights, his brother's body

Bound on the bay, and said : " What at this present
Can I achieve for thee, how raise thy charnel ?
I have no gold, no silver, and no gems,
No bricks, no water, none to build a wall,
Nor any tree where I may lay thee down,
O noble chief ! to slumber in the shade."

V 1573

He stripped his brother's armour off and used
His turban and his jerkin as a shroud,
And thence departing came where Sháh Gushtásp
Had fared so ill. He saw Íránians slain
In numbers that concealed the dust and stones,
And bitterly bewept those hapless ones
Whose fortunes were o'erthrown. There where the
fight

Had been most fierce he saw Gurazm's pale face,
His steed o'erthrown beside him where he lay
O'erstrewn with dust, and thus Asfandiyár
Addressed the slain · " O fool and of ill fortune !
Mark what a wise man of Írán once said,
When giving utterance to his secret thoughts :—
' A foe that's wise is better than a friend
Albeit in both their wisdom we commend,
For wise men think within their powers nor fret
Their souls by seeking what they ne'er can get.'
Thou soughtest my position in Írán,
And broughtest this destruction on the world.
Thou hast deprived this kingdom of its lustre,
Hast practised artifice and uttered lies,
And all the blood poured out in this contention
Will be upon thee in the other world."

He turned his head, still weeping, from the waste,
And came upon the main of Turkman troops.
He saw the host extending seven leagues,
And such that heaven was aghast thereat.
A trench had been constructed round about,
More than an arrow's flight in width. This ditch

He managed with a hundred shifts to cross,
And reined his steed toward the level ground.

The Turkman outpost of some eighty men
Were on their rounds about the battlefield.

V. 1574 They came upon him with disordered ranks,
Came challenging and shouting, and inquired :—
“O lion-man ! what seekest thou by night
Upon the battlefield ?”

He answered them :—

“All that ye care for on the battlefield
Are sleep and feast. When tidings reached Kuhram.—
‘Asfandiyár hath made his passage through you,’
He said to me : ‘Take thy sharp scimitar,
And bring the Day of Doom upon their souls.’”

Then, mindful of the battle with Gushtásp,
He drew his scimitar and laid about him,
O’erthrew full many of them on the road,
And thence departed toward the Sháh’s abode.

§ 32

How Asfandiyár came to the Mountain to Gushtásp

Asfandiyár climbed that high, flinty mountain,
And did obeisance when he saw his father,
Who seared at heart, arose, kissed, and caressed
His son’s face, saying : “I thank God, my boy !
That I have seen thee happy and still ardent.
Regard me not with anger and dislike,
And be not slow to take revenge. Gurazm,
Malignant miscreant that he was, obscured
My heart toward my son, and ill hath come
Upon him for his calumnies, since evil
Befalleth evil men for their ill deeds.
Now by the Ruler of the world I swear,
Who knoweth all things open and concealed,

That if I prosper and o'ercome the foe
 I will bestow the realm, the crown, and throne
 On thee, establish many a shrine, and give thee
 My secret hoards."

Asfandiyár replied :—

"Let me find favour in the monarch's sight,
 It will be treasure, throne, and crown to me
 If he shall be content with me, his slave.
 The monarch knoweth that when I beheld
 Upon the field the face of slain Gurazm
 I shed tears o'er that slanderer and burned
 To think what anguish he had caused the Sháh.
 Our past mishaps are now but wind to me.
 Hereafter when I draw my vengeful sword,
 And set my face to quit this rocky height,
 I will not leave Arjásp, Áyás, or Chín,
 Kuhram, Khallukh, or country of Túrán."

V. 1575

The soldiers, hearing that Asfandiyár
 Was freed from heavy bondage and ill-fortune,
 Pressed on, troop after troop, upon the mountain
 Before their chieftain, while the mighty men,
 The alien, and akin bowed down to him.
 Thus spake high-starred Asfandiyár: "Famed swordsmen !

Draw ye your watered blades, advance to vengeance,
 And slay the foe."

The chieftains blessed him saying :—

"Thou art our crown and falchion of revenge !
 We all will pledge our lives for thee and make
 The sight of thee the rapture of our souls."

They spent the night in ordering the host,
 And getting ready coat of mail and spear.
 Gushtásp held further talk of fortune's ills
 With glorious Asfandiyár and set
 His eyes a-stream in telling of the blood
 Of all those valiant youths that had been slain

Upon the battlefield, whose princely heads
Were now encircled by a crown of gore.

That very night the tidings reached Arjásp:—
“The son of Sháh Gushtásp hath come to him.
He hath slain many scouts upon the way,
And those that were not slaughtered showed their
backs.”

He was in dudgeon, called to him the magnates,
Held converse with Kuhram at large, and said:—
V. 1576 “Our thoughts were other of this war what time
The host set forth. I said: ‘If we can catch
That div still chained the world will issue scathless,
I shall obtain the Íránian throne, and all
Will offer me their homage everywhere.’
Now, since that dív-begotten hath broke loose,
We deal in grief and sighs. None of the Turkmans
Can match him in the fight, so let us march,
Still blithe and yet unworsted, to Túrán
While crown and throne are ours.”

He bade to bring
The treasures and the steeds caparisoned—
The booty carried off from famous Balkh—
And charged Kuhram therewith. Arjásp possessed
Four sons, all younger than Kuhram, and these
Packed, and then loaded up a hundred camels,
Which went, each with a guide, by divers roads.
The king was full of terror and of haste,
He could not eat or take his ease or sleep.

There was among the troops a Turkman named
Gurgsár who came before the king, and said:—
“O monarch of the Turkmans and of Chín!
Fling not away thy glory for one man.
Yon host is smitten, beaten, and in flight,
Its fortune all astound, the Sháh himself
Is all consumed with grief, his sons are slain,
And who hath come except Asfandiyár

To help him? Yet thou break'st thy soldiers' hearts,
 And woundest by thy words without a battle!
 Wise kings fear not, poltroons cause ruin. No mace
 Hath fallen on a helm nor arrow struck
 A barded steed. I will encounter him,
 If he come forth, and fling him to the dust."

Arjásp, on hearing what he said and marking
 His courage and wise counsel, made reply:—

V. 1577

"O warrior eager for the fray! name, birth,
 And parts are thine. If thou make good thy words,
 And prowess the corrival of thy tongue,
 All from this tent up to the sea of Chín,
 And all the treasures of Írán, will I
 Bestow on thee; thou shalt command my host,
 And never will I swerve from thine advice."

Forthwith he gave the army to Gurgsár
 With lordship o'er the more part of the world.

Whenas the sun took up its golden shield,
 And dark night did obeisance, putting off
 Its musk-black raiment while the world's face grew
 All ruby-like in tint, a mighty host
 Descended from the heights. Asfandiyár,
 The ruler of the world, the valorous,
 Led on the troops himself. An ox-head mace
 Depended from his saddle. Sháh Gushtásp
 Was at the centre of the host, his soul
 Full of revenge upon Arjásp. Moreover,
 The offspring of Zarír, Nastúr, at whom
 The lion wont to flee the wood, assumed
 His station on the right as general,
 And ordered all the battle under him.
 Gargwí, the warrior, upon the left
 Came forth as bright as Sol in Aries.

V. 1578

Arjásp on his side ranked his troops; the stars
 Saw not the plain for spears and blue steel swords,
 The air was full of silken flags. The centre,

Where was Arjásp, seemed ebony ; Kuhram
 Was on the right with trumpets and with tymbals,
 And on the left the monarch of Chigil,
 From whom a lion might take heart in fight.
 When king Arjásp beheld the mighty host
 Of chosen, lance-armed cavaliers he went,
 Chose out a height, and thence surveyed the armies
 On every side. The forces of the foe
 Frayed him, the world turned black before his eyes.
 Anon he bade the cameleers to bring
 A hundred strings of camels from the waste,
 And said in private to the men of name :—
 “ If this affair prove long, if victory,
 Success, and glory show not on our side,
 I and my friends will need for safety’s sake
 To take the road upon these rapid beasts.”

Now when between the lines Asfandiyát,
 Like some fierce lion with his lips afoam,
 Was wheeling like the turning firmament,
 And brandishing in hand the ox-head mace,
 V. 1579 Thou wouldst have said : “ The whole plain is his steed ;
 His soul is greater than his skin can hold.”

Arose the war-cry and the clarion’s blare ;
 The warriors of the host advanced. “ The waste,”
 Thou wouldst have said, “ hath grown a sea of blood,
 And all the air is Pleiad-like with swords.”
 Then brave Asfandiyár rose in his stirrups
 And shouted, brandishing his ox-head mace
 Of steel, then, gripping it still tighter, slew
 Three hundred Turkmans of the central host,
 Exclaiming : “ In revenge for Farshídwad
 This day will I raise dust-clouds from the sea.”

Then letting his swift charger have the reins
 He charged against the right wing of the foe,
 And slaughtered eight score of the warriors. *
 Kuhram, when he beheld it, showed his back.

Asfandiyár exclaimed : " Thus I avenge
My grandsire whom my father loved so well,"
Then turned his reins toward the left, and all
The earth became as 'twere a sea of blood.
He slew of mighty men eight score and five,
All men of name possessed of crowns and wealth.
" Thus," said he, " I revenge my noble brothers,
Those eight and thirty who have passed away."

Arjás, on seeing this, said to Gurgsár :—
" Our warriors in numbers numberless
Are slaughtered all ; not one of them is left,
Not one remaineth still before the line.
I know not wherefore thou remainest silent,
Or why thou hadst so much to say before "

The words aroused the spirit of Gurgsár,
And he advanced before the line of battle.
Within his hand he bare a royal bow,
And poplar arrow with a point of steel.
As soon as he was near he aimed his shaft,
And struck the paladin upon the chest.
Asfandiyár hung over on his saddle
So that Gurgsár might deem : " The shaft hath pierced
His breastplate, and the prince's radiant form
Is wounded," and Gurgsár accordingly
Unsheathed his flashing falchion, purposing
To smite the head off from Asfandiyár ;
But he, all fearless of disaster, loosed
The coiled up lasso from the saddle-straps,
And in the Maker's name, the Omnipotent's,
Flung it about his foe whose head and neck
Were taken in the toils. Asfandiyár
Then hurled Gurgsár all quaking to the ground,
Secured, firm as a rock, his hands behind him,
And, having set a halter round his neck,
Dragged him along the ground before the lines,
With blood-foam on his lips, toward the camp,

Dispatched him to the Sháh's safe custody—
 That conquering monarch of the golden helm—
 And said: "Keep this man in the camp-enclosure
 In bonds and no wise think of slaying him
 Till we shall see how fortune will incline,
 And which side gain the day."

Departing thence
 He led his whole host onward to the fray,
 And shouted to the troops: "Where is Kuhram,
 Whose flag is seen no more upon the right?
 Where is Kundur, the swordsman, too—that taker
 Of Lions who was wont to pierce the mountains
 With spears and arrows?"

They informed Arjásp.—
 "Asfandiyár, the hero, hath encountered
 Gurgsár in fight and ta'en him prisoner,
 Bold Lion though he was. The atmosphere
 Is violet-dim with swords of warriors,
 The banner blazoned with the wolf hath vanished."

That portent grieved Arjásp. He bade to bring
 The camels and then took the desert-route.
 He and his courtiers rode those lusty beasts,
 And led their chargers. Thus he left behind
 His army still upon the battlefield,
 While with his lords he fared toward Khallukh.

v. 1581 Asfandiyár sent up a battle-shout,
 The mountain-top re-echoed at his voice.
 He shouted to the Íránians: "Brandish not
 Your scimitars of battle fruitlessly,
 But sheathe them in your foemen's hearts and blood,
 And pile on earth a mount Kárun of slain."

The troops, inspired with vengeance, gripped their
 saddles,
 And host encountered host. Dust, stones, and grass
 Were saturate with gore, and had a mill
 Been standing there the blood had driven it.

The plain was all bestrewn with feet and trunks,
 With severed heads and fists still grasping swords,
 While still the cavaliers of war charged on,
 And gave themselves no time for pillaging.
 Now when the Turkmans heard: "Arjásp hath fled,"
 The skins upon their bodies burst with grief;
 Those that had steeds betook themselves to flight,
 While all the rest threw down their casques and mail,
 And came in sorrow to Asfandiyár,
 Came with their eyes like spring. That mighty one
 Accorded quarter and then ceased to slay.
 He set a chief to guard them, and thenceforth
 Grieved not his grandsire's death. He and his troops
 Came to the Sháh, breast, sword, and Rúman casque
 All blood; it glued the falchion to his hand,
 And his cuirass had galled him, chest and shoulder.
 They washed his hand and scimitar in milk,¹
 And drew the arrows from his mail, and then
 The atheling, triumphant and unharmed,
 Went forth and bathed him. Afterward he called
 For raiment meet for worshippers and sought
 The all-righteous Judge. Gushtásp, all fear and awe,
 Made for a week thanksgiving with his son
 Before the just Creator of the world.
 Upon the eighth day, when Asfandiyár
 Had come again, Gurgsár appeared before him,
 Despairing of sweet life and all a-quake
 With terror like a willow in the wind,
 And said: "O prince! my death will not renown thee;
 I will attend thee as a slave and ever
 Guide thee to good, abate all future ills,
 And show thee how to reach the Brazen Hold."

V. 1582

The prince bade take Gurgsár bound hand and foot,
 Just as he was, back to the camp-enclosure,
 And went to the encampment of Arjásp—

¹ "pour le séparer" (Mohl).

The slayer of Luhrásp—distributed
 The spoils midst horse and foot, committed all
 The captives taken to his chiefs, and slew
 Those that had given the army cause to rue.

§ 33

*How Gushtásp sent Asfandiyár the second Time to
 fight Arjásp*

Asfandiyár, on his return to camp,
 Took counsel with the Sháh about Luhrásp,
 And the revenge for Farshídwand and all
 Those men renowned upon the day of battle.
 To him Gushtásp said: "Thou, O mighty man!
 Rejoicest while thy sisters are in bondage.
 Oh! happy they that died upon the field,
 Not frantic with dishonour from the Turkmans!
 When men behold me sitting on the throne
 What will my subjects say? So long as life
 Endureth I shall weep for this disgrace,
 And burn within my brain. By most high God,
 The Omnipotent, I pledge myself—if thou
 Shalt go without disaster to Túrán,
 v 1583 Courageously confront the Dragon's breath,
 And free thy sisters from the Turkmans, I
 Will yield to thee the crown of empire, treasure
 Which thou hast earned not, and the throne of great-
 ness."

Asfandiyár replied: "May none behold
 A time devoid of thee. I am a slave
 To thee, my sire! I do not seek the kingship,
 And hold my soul and body as thy ransom.
 I am not fain to sit upon the throne
 And rule in person. I will go in quest
 Of vengeance on Arjásp, spare neither field

Nor fell within Túrán, and will restore
My sisters from their bondage to their thrones
All through the fortune of the exalted Sháh,
The master of the world."

Gushtásp invoked
A blessing on him, saying: "Now may wisdom
Be with thee ever, in thy going forth
May God protect thee, and the throne be thine
On thy return."

He called the host together
From all parts where were warriors or archmages,
And from among them chose twelve thousand men,
All skilful cavaliers of high renown,
Distributing to them a donative
That well contented them. He furthermore
Bestowed upon Asfandiyár a throne,
And such a jewelled crown as monarchs use.
Then from the portal of the royal court
A shout rose: "Bring the princes' noble steeds."

They bore the tent-enclosure to the plain,
They bore the eagle-standard, and the host
Marched out mid dust that gloomed the radiant sun.
From palace plainward went Asfandiyár,
And saw an army ready dight for war.

PART II

THE STORY OF THE SEVEN STAGES

ARGUMENT

The poet, after inditing a Prelude in praise of Mahmúd, tells how Asfandiyár set forth with his host to rescue his sisters from the Brazen Hold; how he met with divers adventures by the way, captured the Brazen Hold by a stratagem, delivered his sisters, slew Arjásp, defeated the Túránians, and returned in triumph to his father.

NOTE

In this Part the rivalry between the two greatest heroes of Íránian legend proper, the priestly and the popular hero—Asfandiyár and Rustam—may be said to get fairly under way. For the present it is a rivalry of achievement only. In Part III. it is a personal contention in which every faculty of mind and body is exerted to the utmost in a desperate struggle that results tragically for both protagonists. This rivalry in legend may be said to have commenced even in Part I., where, just as Rustam delivered Tús and the Íránian host when beleaguered by the Turkmans on Mount Hamáwan,¹ so Asfandiyár delivers Gushtásp and his army in similar circumstances from Arjásp.² In the present Part, however, the rivalry becomes more pronounced. As Rustam went alone to release Kai Káuś from imprisonment in Mázandarán and encountered seven adventures on his way, so Asfandiyár goes to Túrán to rescue his enslaved sisters and has a similar series of difficulties to overcome. Again, just as Rustam twice donned merchant's garb, on one occasion to get possession of Mount Sipand,³ and on another to rescue Bízhan when captive in the pit,⁴ so Asfandiyár assumes a like disguise to win the Brazen Hold.⁵ We should notice further that though the parallel expeditions of Rustam and Asfandiyár pass under the same

¹ Vol. iii. p. 132 *seq.*

² p. 106 *seq.*

³ Vol. i. p. 329 *seq.*

⁴ *Id.* iii. 334 *seq.*

⁵ p. 143 *seq.*

name,¹ yet the priestly redactors of the latter's legend have taken care that his achievements should be attended with more pomp and circumstance than his rival's. Thus Rustam goes alone to Mázandarán,² but Asfandiyár, whose princely rank has to be recognised, makes his expedition to Túrán accompanied by his brother and minister—Bishútan—and an army. This, however, is not allowed to militate against the merit of his exploits. When an adventure has to be achieved, the hero sets forth alone, while Bishútan and the troops remain at a respectful distance in the rear till all is over, and then come up to offer their congratulations. Again, Rustam sleeps through his first adventure—the killing of a lion—and only wakes up to find that his steed Rakhsh has done the business for him.³ Asfandiyár slays successively and single-handed two monstrous wolves and a lion and lioness.⁴ The third adventure of both is the slaying of a dragon.⁵ Rustam succeeds with the help of Rakhsh, Asfandiyár with the assistance of a break and pair of horses.⁶ In the next adventure both, after an interlude of wine, lute, and song, put to death a witch,⁷ Ghúl, however, whom Asfandiyár slays, is represented as being the more formidable of the two begulers. Finally, the taking of the Brazen Hold and the slaying of Arjás by Asfandiyár⁸ evidently is intended to eclipse Rustam's capture of Mount Sipand⁹ and his encounter with the White Dív in the cave.¹⁰ We may add that both heroes have a prisoner to guide them during part of their respective expeditions. Rustam rewards Úlúd.¹¹ Asfandiyár slays Gurgsár.¹² The champion of the Faith must not show a mistaken mercy to infidels! Evidently, however, from what we have seen above, it was not considered enough that Asfandiyár should be merely a great religious hero; it was desired that he should be a great popular hero as well, and surpass Rustam on the latter's own ground, for Rustam's Haft Khwán obviously is the original one. There seems also to be a malicious hit at Rustam in Asfandiyár's fifth adventure,¹³ that in which he kills the Símurgh, the traditional guardian of the race of Zál. Popular legend, however, stood firm on behalf of its great hero; it refused to supersede him or to acquiesce in the death of the Símurgh; on the contrary, it kept the great bird alive so that it might compass indirectly its own revenge by providing Rustam with the means of vanquishing Asfandiyár. Worst of all in this world, and to redress the balance, priestly tradition called in

¹ Haft Khwán. See Vol. II. p. 29.

² *Id.* II. 44, iv. 296.

³ *Id.* II. 45.

⁴ pp. 122, 124.

⁵ Vol. II. p. 48, and p. 125.

⁶ *Id.* 50, and p. 128.

⁷ p. 152.

⁸ Vol. I. p. 330.

⁹ *Id.* II. 59.

¹⁰ *Id.* 76.

¹¹ p. 141.

¹² p. 131.

aid the next, and declared Rustam's lot therein to be an unhappy one. This conflict between the legends of the two heroes is typified in the story of their personal encounter in Part III., and we shall gather from Firdausí's splendid version of it, "the deepest conflict of soul in the poem and one of the profoundest in all national epics," as Professor Noldeke justly calls it,¹ that after centuries probably of unconscious give and take the conflicting claims of the two protagonists were compromised, and their combined legend settled down into the marvellous equilibrium which now characterizes it.

§ 1

The Praise of Mahmúd the great King

- V. 1584 The Seven Stages will I next set forth¹
 In words both novel and of dainty worth.
 Oh! may the world's Sháh live for ever, may
 Its potentates be slaves beneath his sway!
 He showed his visage like bright Sol above,
 And graced the surface of the earth with love.
- V. 1585 Sol was in Aries when first he wore
 The crown, and East and West rejoiced therefore.
 The thunder-peal is rolling o'er the hills,
 And tulip and narcissus throng the rills,
 The patient tulip, arch narcissus, yea
 And awesome spikenard and pomegranate gay.
 The clouds have hearts of fire and tearful eyes,
 And bursts of anger mix with melodies.
 The levin flasheth and the waters leap
 Till at the din thou rousest from thy sleep.
 Thus wakened look abroad and call the scene
 Brocade or painted by Mání in Chín,²
 A scene that, bright in sunshine, having spied
 The tulip and narcissus still wet-eyed,
 Will laugh and cry: "Ye minxes! thus again
 I weep for love of you, not wrath or pain."

¹ NIN, § 35. Cf. too, § 30.² Cf. Vol. ii, p. 19 note.

Earth hath no laughter while the heaven is dry.
 I do not call our great king's hand the sky,
 Which only giveth forth its rains in spring,
 For such is not the usance of a king.
 As Sol, when it ariseth gloriously
 In Aries, such shall the Sháh's hand be,
 For whensoever there cometh to his hand
 A wealth of pearls or musk from sea or land,
 The radiance that is his he doth not scant
 To proud-necked monarch and to mendicant.
 Abú'l Kásim! our great Sháh's hand is still
 Thus generous alike to good and ill.
 He never slackeneth in bounteousness,
 And never resteth on the day of stress,
 Delivereth battle when the times demand,
 And taketh heads of monarchs in his hand,
 But largeseth the humble with his spoils,
 And maketh no account of his own toils.
 Oh! may Mahmúd still rule the world, still be
 The source of bounty and of equity!

Now list to what an ancient sage hath told,
 And learn the legend of the Brazen Hold.

V 11586

THE SEVEN STAGES OF ASFANDIYÁR

§ 2

THE FIRST STAGE

How Asfandiyár slew two Wolves

A rustic bard hath spread the board and there
 Set forth "The Seven Stages" as the fare.
 He took within his hand a cup of gold,
 And of Gushtásp and of the Brazen Hold,
 And of the doings of Asfandiyár,

His journey and the counsels of Gurgsár,
 Spake thus :—Now when embittered, tongue and soul,
 Asfandiyár reached Balkh he left his sire,
 And set out with Gurgsár toward Túrán.
 He marched until he came where two roads met,
 And camped there with his host, bade spread the board,
 And furnish wine and harp and minstrelsy,
 While all the captains of the host drew near,
 And sat at table with the king of men,
 By whose directions presently Gurgsár,
 In miserable plight, was brought before him,
 And furnished with a golden goblet filled
 Four times successively. Thereafter said
 Asfandiyár to him : “Thou luckless one !
 I will advance thee to the crown and throne,
 Will give thee all the kingdom of the Turkmans,
 And will exalt thee to the shining sun,
 As soon as I return victorious,
 If thou wilt tell me truly what I ask,
 Nor will I harm thy children, kith or kin ;
 But if thou go about to utter lies
 In any way they will not pass with me,
 My sword shall cleave thee, and the hearts of all
 Shall tremble at thy fate.”

Gurgsár replied :—

“O famous, glorious Asfandiyár !
 From me the king shall hear naught but the truth,
 And be it thine to act the kingly part.”

“Where is the Brazen Hold,” Asfandiyár
 Said, “for its marches march not with Írán ?
 What roads are there to it ? How many leagues ?
 How can it be approached without mishap ?
 Say too how many troops there are within it,
 And tell me what thou knowest of its height.”

“O kind and glorious Asfandiyár !”
 Gurgsár replied, “three roads lead hence to what

Arjásp hath titled 'Battlestead.' One route
 Will take thy troops three months, the second two.
 The first hath water, grass, and towns, and chiefly
 Pertaineth to the chieftains of Túrán.
 The second road, that which will take two months,
 Will furnish for the troops but little provand;
 There is no grass or water for the beasts,
 And thou wilt find no camping-grounds. The third
 Will occupy but seven days, the troops
 Will reach the Brazen Hold upon the eighth,
 But that road is all lions, wolves, and dragons,
 And none can scape their claws; yet mightier
 Than lion, wolf, and savage dragon are
 A witch's charms, who raiseth from the deep
 One to the moon and flingeth to the abyss
 Another headlong. There are wastes, símurghs,
 And bitter frosts which rise like blasts and cut
 The trees. Then will appear the Brazen Hold,
 And none e'er saw, or heard of, such another.
 It toppeth the dark cloud-rack. Arms and troops
 Abound within it. Waters and a river—
 A sight to cheer the soul—environ it.
 The monarch crosseth to the plain by boat
 When he will hunt, but should he stay within
 For five score years the plain could furnish naught
 That he would need, because inside the hold
 Are tilth and pasture, fruit-trees and a mill."

Asfandiyár, on hearing this, was troubled
 Awhile and sighed, but said: "There is no way
 For us save this; the short road is the best
 In this world," and Gurgsár retorted thus:—
 "O king! none e'er by puissance and pains
 Hath made the passage of the Seven Stages
 Without foregoing life."

The chieftain answered:—
 If thou art with me thou shalt see the heart

And strength of Áhriman. What, sayest thou,
Will meet me first? What must I fight for passage?"

Gurgsár replied: "O famed and fearless man!
Two wolves, each like a lusty elephant,
A male and female, having horns like stags
And all a-gog to make a fight of lions,
Broad in the neck and breast and thin of flank,
With monstrous elephants' tusks, first will confront
thee."

Asfandiyár then bade lead back Gurgsár
Bound as he was in miserable plight,
And blithe himself assumed his Kaian casque,
And held his court.

When Sol displayed its crown
On high, and heaven showed earth its mysteries,
The din of drums rose from the royal tent,
Earth turned to iron, air to ebony,
While in high spirits and with fair array
The prince set forward toward the Seven Stages,
And toward Túrán. When he approached the First
He chose a veteran among the host,

V. 1589 A watchful man, hight Bishútan, who guarded
The army from the foe, and said to him:—
"Maintain good discipline among the troops.
I am disturbed by what Gurgsár hath said,
And will go on. If evil shall befall me
It must not come upon my followers."

He went and armed; they girthed his night-hued
steed.

The chief, when he had drawn anigh the wolves,
Sat firmly like a mighty elephant.
The wolves beheld his breast and neck, his waist,
His warrior-handgrip, and his iron mace,
And like grim elephants and keen for fight
Made at him from the plain. The hero strung
His bow and, roaring like a rending lion,

Rained arrows down upon those Áhrimans,
 And hardily employed the horsemen's sleights.¹
 The steel-tipped shafts disabled both the beasts,
 And neither could approach unscathed. With joy
 Asfandiyár perceived them growing weak
 And sore distressed, unsheathed his watered glaive,
 And charged. He hacked their heads and made the
 dust

Mire with their blood, lit from his noble steed,
 Acknowledging his helplessness to God,
 And washed the wolves' gore from his arms and person,
 Then sought a spot that had not been defiled²
 Upon the sand and turning toward the sun,
 With troubled heart and cheeks besmirched with dust,
 Exclaimed: "O righteous Judge! Thou hast bestowed
 Upon me strength, Grace, prowess. Thou hast laid
 These beasts upon the dust and to all good
 Art Guide."

V. 1590

When Bishútan came with the host
 They saw the hero at the place of prayer.
 The warriors were astonished at his exploit,
 And all the troops thought: "Shall we call these wolves
 Or lusty elephants? May such a heart
 And sword and hand live ever! Never may
 The throne of kingship, majesty, and feast,
 And host lack him."

The wary warriors
 Approached and pitched the tent-enclosure round him;
 They set a golden board whereat to dine,
 Partook of victuals and called out for wine.

¹ "et se précipita dans le danger qui *jusque-là* avait accablé tous les cavaliers" (Mohl).

² "Un endroit pur de sang" (*Id.*).

§ 3

THE SECOND STAGE

How Asfandiyár slew two Lions

As for Gurgsár his portion was chagrin
 About those fierce wolves and Asfandiyár,
 Who bade the prisoner be brought before him.
 They brought him quaking, with his face all tears.
 The prince bestowed on him three cups of wine,
 And asked : "What wonder shall I next behold
 By thine account?"

He answered thus the chief:—

"O monarch crowned and leonine of heart!
 Upon the next stage lions will assail thee,
 Such as no crocodile would dare encounter;
 The lusty eagle, valiant though it be,
 Will fly not in their path."

Asfandiyár

Laughed with light heart, and said : "O feckless Turk-
 man!

Tomorrow thou shalt see a valiant man
 Address the lion with the scimitar."

When night grew dark the monarch gave command,
 And they resumed the march. He led the host
 Apace amid the gloom, blood in his eyes,
 V. 1591 Despite at heart, and when the sun had doffed
 Its dusky cloak and donned brocade of gold
 He reached the station for the brave—the plain
 Where he must fight the lions. He commanded
 That Bishútan should come to him, advised him
 At large, and said : "I go to fight in person,
 Committing this exalted host to thee."

He went his way, and drawing near the lions
 Turned all the world to darkness in their hearts.

There were a lion and a lioness,
 And bravely both came forth to fight with him,
 The lion first. He smote it with his sword ;
 Its face grew coral-hued ; 'twas cloven from head
 To midriff, which appalled the lioness,
 Yet, like her mate, she came on savagely.
 The chieftain smote her on the head, which fell
 And rolled upon the sand. Her paws and breast
 Were tulip-hued with blood. He bathed himself
 And, looking to all-holy God alone
 As his Protector, said : " O righteous Judge !
 Thou hast destroyed these creatures by my hand."

Meanwhile the troops came up, and Bishútan
 Surveyed the lions' breasts and limbs while all
 Acclaimed Asfandiyár. That valiant leader
 Thereafter went to his pavilion where
 They served to that pure prince delicious fare.

§ 4

THE THIRD STAGE

How Asfandiyár slew a Dragon

Asfandiyár then ordered to his presence
 The luckless and malevolent Gurgsár,
 Gave him three goblets filled with rosy wine,
 And, when the wine had cheered that Áhriman,
 Addressed him thus and said : " Ill-fated wretch
 Tell what thou knowest of tomorrow's sight."

V. 1592

Gurgsár returned reply : " High-minded king
 May evil-doers ne'er approach to harm thee.
 Gone hast thou into battle like a fire,
 And made a shift to over-pass these bales,
 But know'st not what will come on thee tomorrow.
 Have mercy then upon thy wakeful fortune,

For when tomorrow thou shalt reach the stage
 A greater task by far confronteth thee.
 There will encounter thee an awesome dragon,
 Whose breath doth draw forth from the deep the fish.
 A flame of fire proceedeth from its maw ;
 Its body is a mountain made of flint.
 Now if thou wilt retrace thy steps 'tis well ;
 My very soul is pleading in this counsel.
 Thou hast not any pity for thyself,
 And by that token came this host together."

Asfandiyár replied : " Thou evil one !
 I mean to drag thee in thy chains with me
 To be a witness that this sharp-clawed dragon
 Escapeth not my trenchant scimitar."

At his command some carpenters were fetched,
 And therewithal some long and heavy beams.
 He had a goodly wooden carriage built
 All set about with swords and with a box,
 Framed by a clever carpenter, whereon
 That seeker of the diadem sat down,
 And harnessed to the break two noble steeds
 To put it to the proof. He drove awhile
 In mail, armed with a falchion of Kábul,
 And helmed for fight. Or ever all was ready
 For battle with the dragon night grew dark,
 As 'twere a negro's face, while Luna showed
 Her crown in Aries. Asfandiyár
 Gat on his steed Shúlak ; his noble host

V. 1593 Marched after him. Next day when it was light,
 And night's black flag was furled, the heroic world-lord
 Assumed his breastplate and resigned the host
 To glorious Bishútan, had break and box,
 Wherein he sat, brought forth, attached two steeds
 Of noble stock, and sped toward the dragon.
 Afar it heard the rumble and beheld
 The prancing of the battle-steeds. It came,

Like some black mountain, and thou wouldst have
said :—

“The sun and moon are darkened.” Its two eyes
Seemed fountains bright with blood, while from its
gullet

Fire issued, and like some dark cavern gaped
Its jaws. It bellowed at Asfandiyár,
Who, seeing the monster, drew his breath and turned
To God for help The horses strove to 'scape
The dragon's mischief, but it sucked them in,
Them and the break, and in his box dismayed
The warrior. In the dragon's gullet stuck
The sword-blades, and blood poured forth like a sea ;
It could not free its gullet, for the swords
Were sheathed within it. Tortured by the points
And chariot the dragon by degrees
Grew weak, and then the gallant warrior,
Arising from the box, clutched his keen glaive
With lion-grip and hacked the dragon's brains
Till fumes of venom rising from the dust
O'erpowered him ; he tumbled mountain-like,
And swooned away. Then Bishútan and all
His mighty host came up in tears and grief
Lest ill should have befallen Asfandiyár,
The troops all wailed, dismounted, and advanced
Afoot while Bishútan came hurrying,
And poured rose-water o'er the hero's head.
Now when the atheling had oped his eyes
He thus addressed the exalted warriors :—
“The venom's fumes o'ercame me, for the dragon
Ne'er struck me.”

Rising from the ground like one
Awakening from a drunken drowse he sought
The water, plunged therein, and bathed, bespeaking
A change of raiment from his treasurer.
Then in the presence of all-holy God

He wallowed in the dust and wept, exclaiming :—
 “ Who could have slain that dragon if the World-lord
 Had not assisted him ? ”

His soldiers too
 Bent to the earth and praised the righteous Judge ;
 But thus to find alive Asfandiyár,
 Whom he thought dead, was grievous to Gurgsár.

§ 5

THE FOURTH STAGE

How Asfandiyár slew a Witch

Asfandiyár pitched by the water-side
 His tent-enclosure while the troops camped round him.
 He set forth wine, called boon-companions,
 Rose to his feet, and drank to Sháh Gushtásp,
 Commanding too to bring Gurgsár who came
 Before him, quaking. Then Asfandiyár
 Gave him to drink three cups of royal wine,
 Spake laughingly with him about the dragon,
 And said : “ Thou worthless fellow ! now behold
 How with its breath that dragon sucked us in !
 When I go forward for another stage
 What greater toils and troubles are in store ? ”

Gurgsár replied : “ O conquering prince ! thou hast
 The fruit of thy good star. When thou alightest
 Tomorrow at the stage a witch will come
 To greet thee. She hath looked on many a host,
 But quailed at none. She turneth waste to sea
 At will and maketh sunset at mid day.
 Men call her Ghúl, O Sháh ! Face not her toils
 In these thy days of youth. Thou hast o’ercome
 The dragon, now turn back ; thou shouldst not bring
 Thy name to dust.”

The atheling replied :—

"Tomorrow, knave ! thou shalt recount my prowess,
 For I will break the warlocks' backs and hearts,
 So will I maul that witch, and trample down
 Their heads by might of Him, the one just God."

When day donned yellow weeds, and this world's
 Lustre

Sank in the west, he marched on, packed the loads,
 With prayer to God, the Giver of all good,
 And led the army onward through the night.

When Sol had raised its golden casque, begemming
 The Ram's face, and the campaign was all smiles,
 The prince gave up the host to Bishútan,
 And took a golden goblet filled with wine,
 Called for a costly lute and, though he went
 To battle, dight himself as for a feast.
 He had in view a wood like Paradise,
 Thou wouldst have said: "The sky sowed tulips
 there."

The sun saw not within it for the trees,
 And streamlets like rose-water flowed around.

He lighted from his steed as seemed him good,
 And, having chosen him a fountain's marge
 Within the forest, grasped the golden goblet.
 Now when his heart was gladdened with the wine
 The hero took the lute upon his lap,
 And out of all the fulness of his heart
 Began to troll this ditty to himself:—

"Oh ! never is it mine to see
 Both wine and one to quaff with me,
 But mine 'tis ever to behold
 The lion and the dragon bold,
 And not, from bales' clutch, liberty.

'Tis not my lot to look upon
 On earth some glorious fay-cheeked one,
 Yet now if God will but impart
 A winsome breaker of the heart
 The longing of mine own is won."

Now when she heard Asfandiyár the witch
Grew like a rose in springtide, saying thus :—
“The mighty Lion cometh to the toils
With robe and lute and goblet filled with wine.”

Foul, wrinkled, and malevolent she plied
Her magic arts amid the gloom and grew
As beauteous as a Turkman maid, with cheek
As 'twere brocade of Chín and musk-perfumed,
Of cypress-height, a sun to look upon,
With musky tresses falling to her feet.
Her cheeks like rosaries, she drew anear
Asfandiyár, with roses in her breast.
The atheling, when he beheld her face,
Plied song and wine and harp more ardently,
And said : “O just and only God ! Thou art
Our Guide upon the mountain and the waste.
I wanted even now a fay-faced maid
Of beauteous form as my companion ;
The just Creator hath bestowed her on me,
Oh ! may my heart and pure soul worship Him.”

He plied her with musk-scented wine and made
Her face a tulip-red. Now he possessed
A goodly chain of steel which he had kept
Concealed from her. Zarduhsht, who brought it
down

From Paradise for Sháh Gushtásp, had bound it
About the prince's arm. Asfandiyár
Flung it around her neck ; her strength was gone ;
She took a lion's form. The atheling
Made at her with his scimitar, and said :—
“Thou wilt not injure me though thou hast reared
An iron mountain. Take thy proper shape,
For now the answer that I make to thee
Is with the scimitar.”

Within the chain
There was a fetid hag, calamitous,

With head and hair like snow, and black of face.
 With trenchant sword he smote her on the head, V. 1597
 Which with her body came down to the dust.
 Sight failed, so loured the sky when that witch died,
 While blast and black cloud veiled the sun and moon.
 The atheling clomb to a hill and shouted
 As 'twere a thunder-clap Then Bishútan
 Came quickly with the host, and said : " Famed prince !
 No crocodile or witch, wolf, pard and lion,
 Can stand thy blows, and by that token thou
 Wilt be exalted still. Oh ! may the world
 Desire thy love ! "

The head-piece of Gurgsár
 Flamed at these triumphs of Asfandiyár.

§ 6

THE FIFTH STAGE

How Asfandiyár slew the Símurgh

The atheling laid face upon the ground
 Awhile before the Maker of the world,
 Then pitched his camp-enclosure in the wood.
 They spread the board in fitting mode and then
 Asfandiyár gave orders to the deathsman —
 " Bring hither in his bonds that wretch Gurgsár "

They brought him to the prince who, seeing him,
 Gave him three cups of royal wine. Now when
 The ruddy wine had gladdened him thus said
 Asfandiyár : " Thou wretched Turkman ! mark
 Upon the tree the head of that old witch,
 ' Who turneth,' so thou saidst, ' the plain to sea,
 And doth exalt her o'er the Pleiades.'
 And now what marvel shall I see next stage,

Judged by the standard of this witch ? ”

He answered :—

“ O Elephant of war in battle-time !
Upon this stage thou hast a harder task .
Be more than ever cautious and alert.
Thou wilt behold a mount, with head in air,
And thereupon a bird imperious,
One like a flying mountain, combative,
And called Símurgh by merchants. With its claws
It beareth off the elephant at sight,
The pard on land, the crocodile from water,
And feeleth not the effort. Weigh it not
With wolf and witch. Upon its mountain-home
It hath two young,¹ their wills to hers affined,
And when it flieth the earth is impotent,
The sun is put to shame. ’Twill profit thee
To turn back for thou canst not strive against
Símurgh and mountain-height.”

The hero laughed.

“ A wonder ! ” he exclaimed. “ I will sew up
Its shoulders with mine arrows, cleave its breast
With Indian scimitar, and bring its head
From height to dust.”

When bright Sol showed its back,
Which ruffled all the bosom of the west,
The chief of warriors led the army forth,
And pondered that account of the Símurgh.
Thus he and host fared onward all the night.

Whenas the shining sun rose o’er the mountains
The Lamp of time gave freshness to the earth,
Transforming dale and plain. Asfandiyár
Gave up the army to its chief² and took
To steed and box and break. He sped along,
Like an imperious blast, and spying in air
A peak stayed in its shadow break and steed,

¹ “ Il a deux petits qui sont grands comme lui ” (Mohl). ² Bishútan.

Absorbed in contemplation. The Símurgh
 Marked from the mount the box, the troops behind it,
 And all their trumpeting, and, swooping down
 Like some dark cloud obscuring sun and moon,
 Essayed to seize the chariot with its talons,
 As leopard seizeth quarry, but transfixed
 Its legs and pinions with the swords, and all
 Its might and glory passed away. It beat
 Awhile with claws and beak while strength remained, V 1599
 And then was still. On seeing this its young
 Flew off with screams and weeping tears of blood
 Down from the eyry, blurring every eye
 Beneath their shade. When the Símurgh thus sank
 With all its wounds and bathed steeds, box, and break
 In blood, Asfandiyár, all armed and shouting,
 Emerged and hewed to pieces with his sword
 That bird now mastered, once so masterful,
 Then prayed thus to the Maker who had given
 Such mastery to him in good and ill,
 And said: "O righteous Judge! Thou hast bestowed
 Upon me wisdom, puissance, and prowess,
 Hast driven out the sorcerers and been
 My Guide to every good."

With that arose

The sound of clarions, and Bishútan
 Set forward with the host. None could behold
 The desert for the bird, but only saw
 Its form and talons bathed in blood which covered
 The earth from range to range, and thou wouldst say:
 "The plain was lost in plumes!" Men saw the prince
 Blood-boltered, 'twas a sight to fray the moon,
 And all the captains, cavaliers of war,
 And mighty men applauded him. Anon
 Gurgsár heard tidings of that famed chief's triumph,
 Quaked, paled, and fared with tears and heart all
 anguish.

The world's king had the tent-enclosure pitched,
His joyous warriors round him. Then to dine
They spread brocade, took seat, and called for wine.

§ 7

THE SIXTH STAGE

How Asfandiyár passed through the Snow

Asfandiyár, the illustrious prince, then bade
Gurgsár to come and gave him in succession
Three cups of wine whereat his cheeks became
Like bloom of fenugreek, and then the prince
Addressed him: "Miscreant in mind and body!
Observe the doings of this whirling world!
Evanished are Símurgh and lion, wolf
And dragon sharp of claw and valorous!"

Gurgsár then lifted up his voice and said:—
"O famous, glorious Asfandiyár!
God is thy Helper, O most fortunate!
The royal Tree hath come to fruit; howbeit
Tomorrow there confronteth thee a task
That none in war expecteth. Thou wilt take
No thought of mace or bow or sword, and see
No opening for fight, no way of flight,
For snow, a spear's length deep, will come upon thee,
A crisis will confront thee, thou with all
Thy famous army wilt be lost therein,
O glorious Asfandiyár! No marvel
If thou turn back, nor need my words offend thee;
Thou wilt be guiltless of this army's blood,
And quit this road for other. Sure am I
That earth will rive beneath a mighty blast,
The trees be levelled. E'en if thou shalt make
At last thy way through to the plain beyond
The next stage will be thirty leagues across,

An arid wilderness of dust and sand,
 Which birds and ants and locusts traverse not.
 Thou wilt not see a drop of water there,
 Its soil is ever seething with the sun.
 A lion cannot pass that sandy waste,
 Nor swift-winged vulture fly across the sky.
 No herbage groweth in the arid soil,
 And that is tutty-like,¹ all shifting sands.
 Thus wilt thou fare along for forty leagues,
 Men's souls will fail and horses lose all heart.
 Thy host then will approach the Brazen Hold,
 Which thou wilt find upon no fruitful spot.
 Its soil is in the maw of poverty;
 Its summit holdeth conclave with the sun.
 Outside the castle beasts look not for food,
 The army will not have a horseman left.
 Though there should come a hundred thousand men,
 Sword-wielders from Írán and from Túrán,
 And should beleaguer it a hundred years,
 And shower arrows there, it reckoneth not
 How many enemies or few there be,
 They are but as a knocker on the door."

The Íránians heard Gurgsár, were pained, and said :—
 "O noble prince ! forbear with all thy might
 To compass thine own ruin. If things are
 As said Gurgsár we cannot blink that we
 Came hither to our death and not to wreck
 The Turkmans. Thou hast traversed this rough road,
 And 'scaped disaster from wild beasts. Not one
 Of all our warriors and heroic Sháhs
 Can reckon up so great a tale of toils
 As thou hast met with in these Seven Stages.
 So thank the Maker for it all, and since
 Thou wilt return victorious thou mayst go
 Light-hearted to the Sháh, while if thou marchest

¹ An impalpable powder used for the eyes.

V. 1602

To war elsewhere the whole state of Írán
 Will homage thee. So, as Gurgsár saith, hold not
 Thy person cheaply and involve not all
 A host in slaughter, for this ancient sky
 Will play new tricks. Now that we are triumphant
 And glad there is no need for thee to fling
 Thine own head to the winds."

On hearing this

That young, heroic paladin replied:—
 "Why fray me thus and open for yourselves
 The door of terror? Came ye from Írán
 To counsel then and not for high renown?
 If this was then the mind of all of you
 Why did ye gird yourselves to fare with me
 Since at this miserable Turkman's words
 Ye tremble like a tree? Where then are all
 The counsels and the presents of the Sháh,
 The golden girdles, thrones, and diadems,
 Where all your oaths, your bonds, and covenants
 By God 'neath favouring stars that now your feet
 Should falter thus and one march wreck your plans?
 Turn back then happy and victorious,
 But as for me may I seek naught but fight.
 The World-lord is my conquering ally,
 And fortune's head reclineth on my breast.
 Now by my manhood I will none of you
 As comrades whether I am slain or slay,
 And by my manhood, might of hand, and triumph
 Will show the foe what prowess is. Withal
 Ye shall not lack for tidings of my Grace
 Imperial, famed, and that which I have wrought
 In His name, who is Lord of Sun and Saturn,
 Upon this stronghold by my might and manhood."

The Íránians looked upon Asfandiyár,
 Beheld his eyes all wrath, and went before him

V. 1603

To make excuses: "Let the prince forgive"

Our fault if he see fit. Oh! may our souls
And bodies be thy ransom, such hath been,
And will remain, our covenant with thee.
We grieve for thee, O prince! Our toil and strife
Have not reduced us to extremities,
And, while a chief surviveth, none of us
Will shrink from fight."

Their leader, hearing this,
Grieved for his words and praised the Íránians.

"Prowess."

He said, "will show itself. If we return
Victorious we shall enjoy the fruits
Of our past toil; it will not be forgotten,
And your own treasures shall not be void."

The prince took counsel till the world grew cool,
And zephyrs wafted from the mountain-top,
Then trump and clarion 'sounded from the court-gate,
And all the host set forward, sped like fire,
And called upon the Maker. When the dawn
Rose o'er the mountain-tops, and night drew o'er
Her head her filmy wimple as a veil
Against the blazing sun which pressed behind,
That mighty host—all mace-men clad in armour—
Reached their next stage. It was a glorious day
In spring, a day to gladden heart and world.
The prince bade pitch the tent and tent-enclosure,
Then had the board spread and the wine brought forth.
With that there came a fierce blast from the mountains,
And sore dismayed him. All the world became
Like ravens' plumes, and none knew plain from upland.
From that dark cloud descended showers of snow;
The earth was filled with snow and raging blast,
And o'er the desert for three days and nights
The fury of the wind was measureless.
The tents and tent-enclosure were soaked through,
And not a man could stand or stir for cold.

The air was woof, the snow was like the warp,
 The chief, resourceless, called to Bishútán :—
 "This plight of ours is one with misery.
 I met the dragon's fumings like a man,
 But strength and manhood now avail us not.
 Make supplication, all of you, to God !
 Call ye upon Him, offer to Him praise,
 That He may cause these ills to pass from us,
 Else we are naught henceforth."

Then Bishútán

Made prayer to God, who is the Guide to good,
 While all the soldiers lifted up their hands,
 And offered supplications numberless.
 Thereon a gentle breeze arose which bare
 The clouds away and heaven became serene,
 And when the Íránians had taken heart
 They offered thanks to God. They stayed three days
 And, when the world's Light shone upon the fourth,
 The leader called the officers to him,
 And spake to them at large and graciously :—
 "Leave baggage here and take but gear of war.
 Let every chief that hath a hundred beasts
 Load half of them with water and supplies,
 The other half with means of serving them.
 Leave all the other baggage here, for now
 The door of God is opened unto us.
 When any man hath lost all hope in God
 His portion of success is small indeed,
 But we by help of God shall overcome
 That evil-doer and idolater,
 While ye shall be the richer for yon hold,
 And all have crowns and treasures."

When the sun

Drew o'er its head its yellow veil, and when
 The west became like flower of fenugreek,
 The warriors, having loaded up the beasts,

Marched with the king of men. Now in the night
A sound of cranes came from the sky above.
Asfandiyár was wrathful at the sound,
And sent this message to Gurgsár: "Thou said'st :—
'There is no water for thee on this stage,
Nor rest nor sleep withal.' Yet cranes give note
Above! Why didst thou make us dread a drought?"

Gurgsár replied: "The baggage-beasts will get
But brackish water here, and thou wilt find
The fountains poisonous, though birds and beasts
Use them."

The chief said: "In Gurgsár have I
A hostile guide."

He bade the host proceed.
Invoking God they hurried on at speed.

§ 8

THE SEVENTH STAGE

How Asfandiyár crossed the River and slew Gurgsár

When one watch of the darksome night had passed
There rose a clamour from the plain in front.
The young prince, smiling on his charger, rode
Forth from the centre of the army vanward.
When he had ridden past the troops he saw
A deep, unfathomed river. Now a camel,
One of the caravan whose camelcarr
Had kept it in the front, had tumbled in.
The chieftain seized and dragged it from the mud,
And that malignant Turkman of Chigil
Quaked. At the bidding of the prince he came—
That fell Gurgsár—both seared of heart and fettered.
"Base villain!" said the prince, "why hast thou used
This snake-like subtlety? Didst thou not say:—

‘ Here thou wilt find no water, and the sun
 Will burn thee up ’? Why didst thou make out water
 To be but dust and wouldst have wrecked the host,
 Thou miscreant? ”

He said: “ Thy host’s destruction
 Would be as bright to me as sun and moon.
 I get from thee but fetters; what should I
 Wish but thy bale and loss? ”

The chieftain laughed,
 Stared, was amazed at him, but showed no wrath,
 And said · “ Gurgsár, thou man of little wit!
 When I return victorious from the fight
 Thou shalt be captain of the Brazen Hold:
 Far be from me to harm thee. All the realm
 Is thine if thou wilt give me honest counsel.
 I will not hurt thy children, kith, or kin.”

Gurgsár grew hopeful at the words. In wonder
 He kissed the ground and asked to be forgiven

The prince replied. “ Thy words are passed, but water
 Hath not been turned to land by thy wild talk.
 Where is the ford? Thou must direct us right.”

Gurgsár rejoined: “ No arrow plumed and pointed,
 When ironed thus, can find its way across.
 Thou shalt work magic with the mighty stream
 If thou wilt but unfetter me.”

The hero
 Astonished bade to loose him, and Gurgsár,
 When he had seized a camel by the halter,
 Descended to the stream and at a spot
 That was within his depth essayed the passage.
 The soldiers followed him in single file.
 Inflating at Asfandiyár’s behest
 Their water-skins forthwith, and binding them
 Along the barrels of their beasts of burden,
 They all plunged in. The host and baggage reached
 Land, and reforming to the left and right

Marched till the Brazen Hold was ten leagues off
The captain of the host sat down to meat,
The slaves attended him with cups of wine
And, at that mighty Lion's bidding, brought
His tunic, helmet, coat of mail, and sword.
In merry pin the hero gave command,
And when they brought Gurgsár thus said to him :—
“Now that thou hast escaped calamity
Good words and truthful will become thee well.
When I behead Arjásp and make rejoice
The spirit of Luhrásp; when I behead
Kuhram, who slaughtered Farshíward and troubled
My soldiers' hearts; behead Andarímán,
Who slaughtered eight and thirty of our chiefs
When he prevailed; when for my grandsire's death
I take revenge in all ways; when I make
The lions' maws their tombs and gratify
The Íránian warriors' lust; when I stitch up
Their livers with mine arrows and take captive
Their wives and children, shall I call thee glad
Or grieved thereat? Tell all thy heart to me.”

Heart-straitened, hostile both in speech and soul,
Gurgsár retorted: “How long wilt thou use
Such converse? Be accursed and justly so.
May every evil star control thy life,
Thy waist be cut asunder with the sword,
Thy gory body flung upon the dust,
The earth thy bed, the grave thy winding-sheet.”

Roused by his words, and raging at the oaf,
The prince smote with an Indian sword his head,
And clave him, crown to midriff. To the river
They flung him presently, and that malignant
Grew food for fishes. Then Asfandiyár
Gat on his steed, girt up his warrior-loins
In wrath, and mounted on a height to view
The hold. He saw a mighty iron rampart

V. 1608

Extending over forty leagues by three,
 But saw not any earth or water there.
 The wall was broad enough for cavaliers
 To gallop round upon it four abreast.
 Whenas Asfandiyár beheld that wonder
 He heaved a sigh, and said: "I cannot capture
 A place like that! I suffer for my sins.
 Alas for all my fighting and my toil!
 Repentance is the only fruit thereof."

He looked around upon the waste and saw
 Two Turkmans coursing with four hounds. Descending
 With spear in hand he unhorsed both the Turkmans,
 Brought them upon the heights and questioned them:—
 "What is this splendid hold? How many horsemen
 Are there within?"

They told about Arjásp
 At large and of the hold. "Observe," they said,
 "How long and wide it is! One gate is toward
 Írán and one toward Chín, while in it are
 A hundred thousand swordsmen—all renowned,
 Exalted cavaliers—yet all of them
 Are slaves before Arjásp and bow the head
 To his command and counsel. There is provand
 Past all compute with stores of grain in case
 Fresh food should fail, while if the monarch closed
 The gates for ten years there is food enough,
 Great though his host is, while, if he so willed,
 A hundred thousand noble cavaliers
 Would come to him from Chín and from Máchín.
 He hath no need of aught from any one,
 For he possesseth provand and defenders."

They spake. His Indian sword the chieftain drew,
 And put to death the simple-minded two.

§ 9

*How Asfandiyár went to the Brazen Hold in the
Guise of a Merchant*

Thence he departed to his camp-enclosure.
 They cleared the place of strangers, Bishútan
 Came to Asfandiyár, and they discussed
 The war. That warrior said: "We might assail
 This hold in vain for years unless indeed
 I take upon me to demean myself,
 And try a stratagem against the foe.
 Be thou upon the watch here night and day,
 And guard the army from the enemy.
 A man, I ween, is held in high esteem,
 And worthy of a realm and lofty throne,
 Who feareth not a host of enemies
 In battle, pard on mount or crocodile
 In water, but proceedeth now by craft
 And now by force, whiles mounting, whiles descending.
 I shall approach the hold in merchants' guise,
 And none will know me for a paladin.
 All craft will I employ and con all lore.
 Dispense not thou with watchmen and with scouts,
 And never let thy vigilance relax.
 If in the day the watch shall spy a smoke,
 Or in the night a bonfire like the sun,
 The Lustre of the world, then be assured
 That 'tis my doing, not my foeman's ruse,
 So order thou the army and march hence,
 With coat of mail, with helm, and massive mace,
 Set up my flag without delay and take
 Thy station at the centre of the host;
 Charge with the ox-head mace, and bear thee so
 That folk will hail thee as Asfandiyár."

He called the head-man of the cameleers,

Caused him to kneel to Bishútan, and said.—
 “Bring me a hundred beasts with ruddy hair,
 Beasts fit to carry burdens, sound and strong.”

Ten of these beasts he loaded up with gold,
 Upon five more he put brocade of Chín,
 Another five had various kinds of gems,
 A golden throne and massive crown. He brought
 Forth eighty pairs of chests, whose fastenings
 Were all concealed from sight, and therewithal
 Made choice of eight score of his mighty men—
 Such men as would not make his purpose known—
 V. 1610 And, having hidden them within the chests,
 Bound on the baggage and set forth. He bade
 Some twenty of his nobles skilled in sword-play
 To take the conduct of the caravan,
 And turned these nobles into cameleers.

With slippered feet, a blanket thrown about him,
 And freighted with the jewels, gold, and silver,
 The chieftain went in haste toward the hold,
 And journeyed in the guise of chafferers
 He led the way, and when the sound of bells
 Rose from the caravan the chiefs inside
 The hold grew ware of it, held talk at large,
 Were all a-gog, and said : “A merchantman,
 Who selleth a dínár’s worth for a drachm,¹
 Hath come.”

The dealers and the nobles went ;
 To buy, and asked the owner : “What hast thou
 Of use within these bales ?”

He made reply :—
 “The first thing is for me to see your king,
 And show my wares to him. When he commandeth
 I will display them to your eyes”

He loaded

¹ *I.e.*, Who will give us an opportunity of buying at a lower price than usual.

One of the camels and himself proceeded-
 To see how he could make his market quickly.
 He took a goblet filled with royal gems,
 And many a piece of gold to give in largess,
 Some signets set with ruby and with turquoise,
 A steed, and ten bales of brocade of Chín.
 He draped the goblet in a piece of silk,
 Perfumed throughout with musk and spicery,
 He donned a dress of beautiful brocade,
 Sought for an introduction to Arjásp,
 And at the interview strewed gold, and said :—
 “May wisdom mate with kings! A merchant I :
 My sire was Turkman and my mother Persian.
 I purchase from Túrán, bear to Írán,
 And also to the desert of the brave.
 I have with me a caravan of camels,
 And deal in stuffs, in clothes, and furniture,
 In jewels, crowns, and other valuables.
 I left my goods outside the hold, assured
 That all are safe with thee. If thou wilt let
 The cameleers conduct the caravan
 Within the hold thy fortune will protect me
 From every ill, and I shall sleep beneath
 The shadow of thy love.”

V. 1611

Arjásp replied :—

“Be happy and secure from every ill ;
 No one shall do thee hurt within Túrán,
 Nor when thou goest to Máchín and Chín.”

At his command they gave Asfandiyár
 Within the Brazen Hold a spacious dwelling—
 A warehouse with a mansion at its back¹—
 And thither brought the baggage from the plain
 That he might make the warehouse a bázár,
 And keep his goods in safety. They departed,
 And led the camels, after loading them.

¹ “un magasin aux approches du palace” (Mohl).

A shrewd man asked : " What is inside the chests ? "

A cameleer replied · " Our wits, for we
Must carry them themselves."

Asfandiyár

Prepared the warehouse, decking it to look
Like flowers in spring On all side buyers sprang up,
And there was busy trafficking within it.

V 1612 The night passed by. At dawn Asfandiyár
Went to the palace to the king, there kissed
The ground before him, praised him much, and
said :—

" I and my cameleers have made all haste
To bring the caravan and baggage in,
And there are crowns and bracelets suitable
For an exalted king, so let him bid
His treasurer inspect my stock, for all
The warehouse is in order. I shall be
Content if he will take what seemeth best ;
The king's part is acceptance and the merchant's
Excuse and praise."

Arjásp smiled, showed him favour,
Assigned him a more honourable seat,
And asked : " What is thy name ? "

He said : " Kharrád,
A merchant, traveller, and well to do."

The king replied : " O noble man ! concern not
Thyself with more excuses. Ask no longer
For audience through the chamberlain, but come
Before me when thou wilt."

He then inquired
About the labours of the road, Írán,
The Sháh, and host. Asfandiyár replied :—
" My journey hath been five months' pain and toil."

The king said : " In Írán what tidings were there
Both of Asfandiyár and of Gurgsár ? "

He said : " My gracious lord ! folk speak of them,

Each as his fancy is : 'Asfandiyár,'
 Said one, 'is in revolt for injuries
 Inflicted by his sire.' Another said :—
 'He is advancing by the Seven Stages
 In haste to fight Arjásp ; he will attempt
 War with Túrán and boldly seek revenge.' "

Arjásp replied with smiles : "No man of age
 And knowledge of the world would talk like that !
 If vultures e'en approach the Seven Stages
 Then call me Áhriman and not a man."

V. 1613

The warrior heard and, having kissed the ground,
 Came from the palace of Arjásp rejoicing,
 Then opening the noted warehouse-doors
 He filled the hold with din of chaffering,
 And seemed so occupied that he deceived
 The eyes of all. Scarce for dínárs took he
 The worth of drachms and traded recklessly.

§ 10

How the Sisters of Asfandiyár recognised him

Now when the bright sun set and buying ceased
 The sisters of Asfandiyár descended
 Lamenting from the palace to the street,
 And bearing water-jars upon their shoulders.
 They came heart-broken and in deep dejection
 Toward Asfandiyár who, when he saw
 That monstrous spectacle, concealed from view
 His features from his sisters, for his heart
 Misdoubted how they might comport themselves,
 And so he hid his face behind his sleeve.
 They both drew near him and the cheeks of each
 Were running with the torrents from their eyes.
 The hapless ones began to question him—
 That wealthy man of merchandise—and said :—

" May all thy days and nights be prosperous,
 The nobles be before thee as thy slaves !
 What tidings hast thou from Írán, brave chief !
 Both of Gushtásp and of Asfandiyár ?
 We twain, the daughters of the king of kings,
 Are captives in the hands of wicked men,
 And carry water, bare-foot and unveiled.
 Our sire hath merry days and peaceful nights,
 While we fare naked in the throng. How blest
 Is she that hath a shroud to cover her !
 The tears that we are shedding are of blood .
 Be our physician and relieve our pain.
 If thou canst tell us aught of Sháh and home
 Our bane here will be changed to antidote."

V. 1614

He gave a cry beneath his robe that made
 The damsels shake with terror : thus he said :—
 " I would that there were no Asfandiyár,
 And no one in the world to care for him.
 Would there were no Gushtásp, that unjust Sháh :
 May crown and girdle never see his like !
 Perceive ye not that I am trading here,
 And toiling that I may support myself ? "

When glorious Humái had heard his voice
 She recognised him and took heart again,
 But, though she recognised his voice, she kept
 The knowledge to herself and stood before him
 As stricken to the heart as theretofore,
 And pouring down the tear-drops on her cheeks.
 Her feet and countenance were foul with dust,
 Her soul was filled with terror of Arjásp.
 The gentle warrior saw that Humái
 Had recognised him and he thereupon
 Revealed his countenance, his tearful eyes,
 His heaving breast, and visage like the sun.
 The process of the world astonished him,
 He bit his lips in dudgeon and addressed

His sisters thus : " Restrain your tongues awhile,
 For hither have I come to war and win
 Renown by toil. Can any's sleep be sweet
 Whose daughter is a water-bearing slave ?
 May heaven father, and earth mother, her :
 This lot I praise not I."

The young man left

The warehouse, hurried to Arjásp, and said :—
 " O king ! be happy, master of the world,
 And live for ever. While upon my journey
 I chanced upon a deep sea all unknown
 To merchantmen. A whirlwind rose thereon ;
 The boatman said : ' I mind me of no like.'
 On board we all were wretched and in tears,
 Consuming for our persons and our lives.
 I swore by God, the one and only Judge :—
 ' If I escape from this with life to shore
 Then will I hold a feast in every realm
 That hath a monarch to rule over it,
 Invite all cordially to be my guests,
 And pour my very soul out for their sakes.
 I will give more or less to all who ask,
 And hold the mendicant exceeding dear.'
 Now let the monarch show me special favour,
 And honour this request of mine today ;
 I have arranged to make his army's chiefs—
 Those whom the world's king honoureth—my guests,
 And by so doing set my mind at ease."

V. 1615

Arjásp, that witless man, was well content
 On hearing this ; his head was filled with folly.
 He bade : " Let every one of high degree,
 And all the noblest of the army, visit
 The dwelling of Kharrád today as guests,
 And, if he giveth wine, bemuse yourselves."

Then said Asfandiyár : " King, hero, sage
 The high-priest and the ruler of the world !

My house is small, thy palace is too grand.
 The rampart of the hold will do for us;
 'Tis early summer. I will light a fire,
 And glad the nobles' hearts with wine."

Arjásp

Said: "Go the way that pleaseth thee; the host
 Is king at home."

The paladin rejoicing

Conveyed a mass of firewood to the ramparts.
 They slaughtered steeds and sheep, and carried them
 Up to the summit of the hold. The wood
 Sent up a smother that obscured the sky.
 He brought forth wine and, when they had partaken,
 Each reveller became a slave thereto.
 The chiefs all left bemused; to steady them,
 While in their cups, each clutched a narciss-stem.¹

§ 11

How Bishútan assaulted the Brazen Hold

V. 1616 The night came and a conflagration blazed,
 Whose burning scorched the sky. When from the
 look-out

The watchman saw the flames by night, and day
 Made thick with smoke, he left his post and came
 Exultingly, and "mated to the wind,"

Thou wouldst have said. On reaching Bishútan
 He told what he had seen of fire and fume.

Said Bishútan: "A valiant warrior
 In courage passeth elephants and lions."

He sounded corn-pipe, flute, and brazen cymbal;
 The blare of trumpets went up from his door.

The army from the plain approached the hold,
 And bright Sol gloomed with dust. The troops were all
 In mail and helm, their livers seethed with blood.

¹ "c'est-à-dire le bras d'un page" (Mohl). Cf. p. 164.

When news spread in the hold : " A host hath come,
And all the world is hidden by dark dust," ;
The place rang with the name " Asfandiyár " ;
The tree of bale was bearing colocynth.

Arjásþ armed for the fray and rubbed his hands
Together vehemently. " Let Kuhram,
The lion-catcher," thus he bade, " take troops,
Mace, scimitar, and shaft."

He told Turkhán :—

" Exalted chief ! speed forth with troops for fight.
Take thou ten thousand of the garrison,
All men of name and battle-loving swordsmen,
Discover who are our antagonists,
And why it is that they attack us thus "

Turkhán, the chief, with an interpreter
Went in all haste to that side of the hold.
He saw a host equipped with arms and armour,
Their flag a leopard on a sable ground.
Their leader Bishútan was at the centre,
And all his troops' hands had been bathed in blood.
He held Asfandiyár's own mace and rode
A noble steed , he seemed to be none other
Than brave Asfandiyár, and there was none
But hailed him monarch of Írán. He ranked
The troops to right and left till none saw daylight.
Such were the blows of spears with flashing points
That thou hadst said : " Blood raineth from the clouds."
The forces on both sides advanced to battle,
All who were men of war and loved the fray.
Then Núsh Ázar, the swordsman, galloped forth,
And offered combat to the enemy.
The noble chief Turkhán went out to him
To bring his head down trunkless to the ground.
When Núsh Ázar beheld him on the field
He clapped his hand upon his sword and drew it ;
He cut Turkhán asunder at the waist,

V. 1617

And filled Kuhram's heart with dismay and anguish;
 Then in like fashion fell upon the centre,
 Where great and small were all alike to him,
 Thus those two armies battled, each with each,
 While dust collected in a cloud above them.
 In full flight from the host the chief Kuhram
 Made for the hold, and said before his sire —
 "O famous monarch, glorious as the sun!
 A mighty host hath come forth from Írán,
 Their leader is a doughty warrior,
 Who by his stature is Asfandiyár.
 None like him hath approached the hold before.
 He beareth in his hand the spear which thou
 Beheld'st him grasping at fort Gumbadán."¹

The words distressed the heart of king Arjásp,
 Because the old feud had revived again.
 He gave the Turkmans orders: "Go ye forth
 Upon the plain in mass, surround the foe,
 Roar like great lions, let none live, and name not
 Írán again."

The soldiers marched away
 With wounded hearts and eager for the fray.

§ 12

How Asfandiyár slew Arjásp

Asfandiyár, when night was growing dark,
 Arrayed himself again in fighting-gear,
 Undid the chest-lids that more air might come
 To those inside, and brought kabáb and wine
 With other provand, battle-mail, and raiment.
 When they had eaten he supplied to each
 Three cups of wine, which gladdened them, and said:—

¹ *I.e.* at the battle fought in that neighbourhood, when Asfandiyár delivered Gushtásp from his perilous position on the mountain, where he was beleaguered by Arjásp. See p. 106 *seq.*

"This night is one of bale. Hence we may well
Win fame. Put forth your powers. Quit you like men,
And from calamities make God your refuge."

Then of those warriors adventurous
He formed three troops, one in the stronghold's midst
To combat any that they met, the second
To move upon the gate and take no rest
From strife and bloodshed, while he told the third.—

"I must not find hereafter any trace
Of those that revelled with me yesternight,
So take your daggers and behead them all."

He went with twenty valiant men of war
In haste, committing to them other work,
Went boldly to the palace of Arjásp,
Arrayed in mail and roaring like a lion.
Humái, when these shouts reached her in the palace,
Came rushing with her sister Bih Afríd,
Their cheeks all hid by tears, to meet the chiefs.
Asfandiyár perceived that spring-like pair
As he approached. "Like flying dust-clouds speed," V. 1619
Thus spake that lion-man, "to my bázár
With all its wealth, for 'tis upon my way,
And wait till in this fight I lose my head
Or win a crown."

This said, he turned from them,
And vengeful sought the palace of Arjásp.
He entered with an Indian sword in hand,
And slaughtered all the nobles that he saw.
The audience-chamber of that famous court
Was blocked, its floor was like a billowing sea,
So many were the wounded, stunned, and slain.

Arjásp awoke, was troubled at the din,
Arose in fury, donned his coat of mail
And Rúman helm, a bright glaive in his hand,
The war-cry on his lips and rage at heart.

Asfandiyár rushed from the palace-gate,

And, clutching with his hand a glittering sword,
 Cried to Arjâsp: "Now will this merchantman
 Supply thee with a sword that cost dínârs.
 I give it as a present from Luhrâsp,
 And on it is impressed Gushtâsp's own seal.
 When thou shalt take it thine heart's blood will flow,
 And thy next stage will be beneath the dust."

They closed in strife outrageous, foot to foot
 With sword and dagger, striking whiles at waist
 And whiles at head. Arjâsp failed 'neath the blows;
 He was a mass of wounds, his huge form sank,
 And then Asfandiyâr beheaded him.

Such is the fashion of life's changeful day!
 Thou hast by turns its sweetness and its bane.

V. 1620

Why dote upon this Hostel by the Way?
 Grieve not, thou canst not, as thou know'st, remain.

Asfandiyâr, freed from Arjâsp, commanded
 To kindle torches and to fire the palace:
 He raised its reek to Saturn. Having charged
 The eunuchs with the womenfolk he carried
 Them all away—the Lustre of the place—
 And set a seal upon the treasury-door,
 No one opposing him. He sought the stables,
 He mounted there with Indian sword in hand,
 And of the Arab horses bade his men
 To saddle such as liked him. There went forth
 A cavalcade of eight score warriors,
 Approven horsemen on the day of battle.
 He furnished mounts, moreover, for his sisters,
 And marched forth from the court-gate of Arjâsp,
 But left a few Írániâns, men of name,
 With noble Sáwa in the hold. "When we,"
 He said, "have gone outside the walls, have gone,
 I and my noble warriors, to the plain,
 Secure the gate against the Turkman troops,
 And may my good star aid me. When ye think

That I have joined our noble troops outside,
 Then let the watchmen from the look-out cry :—
 ‘Blessed be the head and crown of Sháh Gushtásp,’
 And when the Turkman troops come toward the hold,
 In flight retreating from the battlefield,
 Then ye shall throw the head of king Arjásp
 Before them from the tower of the watch.”

The valiant hero rushed upon the plain,
 And slaughtered all the Turkmans that he found.
 As he approached the troops of Bishútan
 They saw and praised him in amaze that he,
 Who was so young, should show such bravery.

V. 1621

§ 13

How Asfandiyár slew Kuhram

Whenas the moon had left her silvern throne,
 And when three watches of the night had passed,
 The watchman shouted lustily, proclaiming :—
 “Gushtásp, the Sháh, hath gained the victory,
 And may Asfandiyár be ever young.
 May heaven, moon, and fortune be his helpers,
 Who hath in vengeance for Luhrásp beheaded
 Arjásp and, adding lustre to our Grace
 And customs, cast him down from throne to dust,
 And made the name and fortune of Gushtásp
 Resplendent.”

Hearing such a cry the Turkmans
 All listened while Kuhram grew dark of heart
 By reason of that watchman, was astonished,
 And spake thus to Andarímán: “How clear
 This cry is in the night! What, sayest thou,
 Can be the cause? Let us consult, for who
 Would dare to bawl thus by the monarch’s couch
 And after dark? What tricks might such an one

Play in the day of battle and thus bring
 Our nobles into straits! So send and have
 His head cut off, whoever he may be.
 If one of our own household is our foe,
 And he is backing up our enemies

V. 1622 With evil words and evil presages,
 Then will we brain him with an evil mace."

Now when the cry went on persistently
 Kuhram was stricken to the heart with anger
 Against the watch whose utterance, spread abroad
 In such a fashion, filled the nobles' ears.
 The soldiers said: "The shouts increase, beyond
 A watchman's! Let us drive the foemen forth
 And after take¹ this host."

Kuhram was straitened

At heart about that watchman, writhed, and frowned.
 He told the troops: "These men have filled my
 heart

With dread about the king. We must return
 At once, past question. What may happen after
 I know not."

So that night they left the field,

Whereat Asfandiyár, with ox-head mace
 And mailed, pursued them. When Kuhram had
 reached

The portal of the hold, and saw the Íránians
 Pursuing, "What is left us," he exclaimed,
 "Unless to fight with brave Asfandiyár?
 Unsheathe and send your message by the sword."

But fortune frowned and those famed chiefs fared ill.
 The two hosts raged and smote each other's heads
 Till morning came, and then the chiefs of Chín
 Had had their day Ascending to the ramparts
 The warriors of Asfandiyár inside

¹ In the sense of "No fairy takes nor witch hath power to charm"
 —*Hamlet*, i. 1.

The hold flung down therefrom the severed head
 Of brave Arjásp—the king that slew Luhrásp.
 The Turkmans fought no longer, from their host
 Arose a cry, and all the troops unhelmed.
 The two sons of Arjásp wept and consumed
 As in fierce fire, while all the army knew
 What they must weep for on that evil day.
 They said : “ Alas ! thou gallant heart, thou prince,
 Thou chief of lions, hero, warrior !
 May he who slew thee perish on the field
 Of vengeance, may his day be gone for ever !
 To whom shall we intrust our families ?
 Whose standard shall we have upon our right ?
 Now that the dais is bereaved of king
 Let crown and host not be.”

V. 1623

The soldiers longed

For death, and from Khallukh up to Taráz
 Was universal anguish. In the end
 They all of them advanced to certain death,
 Advanced in armour with their helms and casques.
 Rose from the battlefield the sound of strife,
 The air above was like a dusky cloud.
 The slain lay everywhere in heaps, the plain
 Was thick with trunkless heads and limbs ; else-
 where
 Lay hands and maces, while a wave of blood
 Rose at the portal of the hold, and who
 Could tell left hand from right ? Asfandiyár
 Advanced , Kuhram, the captain of the host,
 Opposed him , and those warriors grappled so
 That thou hadst said . “ They are one ! ” The peerless
 chief
 Took by the waist Kuhram, whirled him aloft—
 A wondrous feat—and dashed him to the ground
 While all the Íránian army roared applause.
 They bound his hands and bore him off in shame,

And all his splendid armament dispersed.
 Then maces fell like hail, the earth was full
 Of Turkmans, and the air was charged with death,
 Heads showered beneath the swords like leaves from
 trees;

One side lost all, the other gained a throne,
 Blood dashed in billows on the battlefield,
 Here heads were trampled and there heads were
 crowned.

V. 1624

The world is fain to keep its secret still,
 And no man really wotteth of its will

Those that had noble chargers fled the field,
 Those in the Dragon's gullet strove in vain.
 Few of Túrán or Chín were left and none
 Of name. All flung away their mail and helms,
 And all had blood-drops in their eyes. They made
 All haste to come before Asfandiyár
 With eyes like early spring. The general
 Shed blood unmercifully, and the host
 Approved the want of mercy that he showed;
 He gave no quarter to a warrior,
 And had the wounded slaughtered past account;
 No noted warrior of Chín remained,
 No prince was left surviving in Túrán.

They moved the camp-enclosure and the tents,
 And left the whole field to the slain. He reared
 Before the palace-gate two lofty gibbets
 Whence twisted lassos fell. From one he hung
 Andarímán head-downward, from the other
 His brother¹ living, sent out troops on all sides,
 And when they lighted on some chieftain's seat
 His orders were that they should burn it down.
 They wrecked thus all the cities of Túrán;
 No man of name was left in any place,
 And not a horseman in Túrán or Chín.

¹ Kuhram.

Thou wouldst have said · “ There rose a murky cloud,
And poured down fire upon the battlefield.”

The atheling, with matters in this trim,
Brought wine and gathered all the chiefs to him.

§ 14

How Asfandiyár wrote a Letter to Gushtásp and his Answer

Asfandiyár called for a scribe and told
The story of his stratagem and fight.
The illustrious scribe sat on the throne and bade V. 1625
His Turkman slave to bring him silk of Chín
And pen which having inked, he lauded first
The Master of the Moon, the Lord of Saturn,
Of Venus and the Sun, of elephant,
Of ant, of victory, and Grace divine,
The Lord of the imperial diadem,
The Lord of right direction and good gifts,
The Lord of place and counsel : “ May the name
Of Sháh Gushtásp for ever live through Him,
Luhrásp have all his will in Paradise !
I reached Túrán and by a road which I
Shall never praise If I narrated all
Youth’s locks would age with grief, but when the Sháh
Is so disposed I will expound the plan
Of my campaign , his sight will gladden me,
And I shall revel in these longsome toils.
The Brazen Hold, by means of the devices
That I employed to compass my revenge,
Is void both of Arjásp and of Kuhram,
Is void of all save wailing, grief, and mourning.
I have spared none ; the herbs upon the plain
No longer bear , the lion and wolf devour
The brains, and lusty pards the hearts, of men.
Oh ! may the crown of Sháh Gushtásp illume

The sky, and Sháh Luhrásp make earth a rosebed."

They set the signet of Asfandiyár
Upon the letter and made choice of riders,
Whom that young ruler sent forth to Írán
On beasts that went apace with lips afoam.
He tarried till he should receive the answer,
Repressing all a self-willed man's impatience,
And in a little while the answer came,
A key whereby his fetters were unlocked
It opened thus: "Established may he be
That seeketh good. The rightly minded sage
Will compass in adversity God's praise."

V. 1626

It further said: "I pray the one just God
That He may guide thee ever. I have planted
In Paradise a Tree that is more bearing
Than any set by Farídún. Its fruit
Is gold and rubies and its leafage beauty
And Grace. Its summit chafeth on high heaven;
Its roots withal are precious. May this Tree
Abide for ever, flourishing of stem,
And glad of heart—the favourite of fortune!
As for thy words: 'By craft and subtlety
I sought for vengeance for my grandsire's death,
And then for thy description of the bloodshed,
And of thine exploits in the fight—the persons
Of kings are precious though renown may come
From strife and travail. Guard thy person well
And wisdom too, for wisdom nourisheth
The mind with knowledge. Thirdly thou hast said:
'Of all these thousands I have spared not one.'
Be thy heart ever warm and merciful,
Be temperate in soul and soft in voice.
Let it not be thy business to shed blood,
Or fight with chieftains, saving for revenge,
Because the bloodshed hath surpassed all bounds
In this thy wreak for eight and thirty brothers.

But in that, though thy grandsire in old age
 Had banished craft and ill will from his heart,
 Since they shed his blood thou hast shed theirs too,
 And closed with them like lions when they fight,
 For that be ever fortunate and happy,
 And do the dictates of thy soul and wisdom.
 I long to look upon thy face and mind
 So doughty and so shrewd. On reading this
 Bid thy troops mount, and come back with thy chiefs
 To court."

The speedy dromedaries went,
 And all Írán re-echoed with the news.
 Now when they had returned the cameleers
 Came to the exalted chief who had no peers.

V. 1627

§ 15

How Asfandiýár returned to Gushtásp

Asfandiýár, when he had read the letter,
 Distributed dínárs and made an end,
 Reserving but the treasure of Arjásp,
 While lavishing the treasures of his kinsmen :
 The troops were all enriched beyond compute.
 On plain and mountain there were steeds and camels,
 All brand-marked by the monarch of Túrán.
 Ten thousand head of these Asfandiýár
 Collected from the plain and mountain-top,
 And bade his men to load of them a thousand
 With gold out of the royal treasury,
 Three hundred with brocade and thrones and casques,
 Five score with musk, with ambergris, and jewels,
 Five score with crowns and splendid diadems,
 One thousand with brocaded tapestries,
 Three hundred with the native stuffs of Chín,
 With hides both raw and tanned and painted silks

He furnished litters with brocaded curtains,
 And carried off from Chín two troops of girls,
 With cheeks like spring and tall as cypress-trees,
 With reed-like waists and pheasant-like in gait.
 A hundred ladies, beautiful as idols,
 Went with the sisters of Asfandiyár.
 Five ladies of the kindred of Arjás—
 His mother, his two sisters, and two daughters—
 Toiled on in misery and wretchedness,
 In pain and grief and stricken to the heart,
 V. 1628 And, finally, he fired the Brazen Hold;
 The tongue of flame ascended to high heaven.
 He razed the castle-ramparts to the ground,
 And sent the dust up from the land of Chín.
 He gave his three young sons a force each, saying.—
 "Take various roads, and fortune be with you.
 If any shall insult you on your way
 Cut off the head of such remorselessly.
 March ye in haste toward the desert-track,
 And raise your spear-points to the shining sun.
 I shall myself go by the Seven Stages
 To hunt the lion. Make what speed ye may,
 But I shall take my time, shall occupy
 The road's end, and expect you in a month."
 Asfandiyár went with his famous troops
 To hunt along the Seven Stages' route.
 As soon as he approached the frozen stage
 He saw his baggage lying all about.
 The air was sweet, the earth was beautiful:
 Thou wouldst have said: "'Tis spring in summertime!"
 He gathered all the goods that he had left,
 And marvelled that he was so fortunate.
 As he was drawing nearer to Írán—
 The land of Lions and of warriors—
 He whiled away two weeks with hawks and cheetahs,
 Distressed with travail and the longsome road,

And kept a watch for his three noble sons,
Whose long delay in coming angered him,
But when the armies and the sons arrived
He smiled on all, and said : " My journey done,
I was anangered at your tarrying."

The three sons kissed the ground and made reply .—
" Who hath a father in the world like thee ? "

He went thence toward Írán and bare off all
The treasures to his valiant countrymen.
The folk decked all the cities of the land,
And called for wine, for harp, and for musicians.
They draped the walls with hangings and showered
musk

And ambergris from overhead. The air
Resounded with the voice of minstrelsy,
And earth was full of horsemen armed with spears.

V 1629

Gushtásp made merry when he heard the news,
And pledged the tidings in a cup of wine.
At his command all that were with the host,
And all the great men of the provinces,
Assembled at the palace-gate with drums.
The chiefs went out to meet Asfandiyár.
His sire, moreover, with illustrious sages,
The great, the wise, and the archmagés, went
With beaming countenance toward his son,
And all the city talked of little else.
Now when the prince beheld his father's face
His heart grew merry and his spirit bright.
He urged his black steed forward from the ranks,
That steed which set a-blaze the flames of war,
And, having lighted down, embraced his sire,
Who, wondering at his exploits, praised him much,
Thus saying : " Ne'er may time and earth lack thee."

Thence went they to the palace of the Sháh
In popularity with all the world.
Gushtásp prepared the palace and the throne ;

His great good fortune made his heart rejoice.
They spread the banquet in the halls. The Sháh
Said to the chamberlain: "Invite the lords."

The boon-companions came from every side
To that imperial Sháh. The royal wine
In crystal goblets gave to those that quaffed
A lustre like the sun's; upon their cheeks
The flush of wine was burning, and the hearts
Of evil wishers died and were consumed.
The son drank modestly his father's health,
The father in like manner pledged his son,
And asked him how he passed the Seven Stages.
Asfandiyár replied: "Nay, ask me not
Such questions in the banquet-hall. Tomorrow
Will I relate the story in thy presence,
Wise king of men! Tomorrow thou wilt hear
In soberness and own that God hath triumphed."

V. 1630

Each one among the guests that grew bemused
Went homeward clinging to a moon-faced page.¹

Told is the story of the Stages Seven,
Peruse it in His name—the Lord of Heaven,
Lord of the sun and of the shining moon,
Him who alone hath power for bale or boon.
If this tale please our conquering monarch's eye
I set my saddle on the circling sky.

The time to quaff delicious wine is now,
For musky scents breathe from the mountain-brow,
The air resoundeth and earth travaileth,
And blest is he whose heart drink gladdeneth,
He that hath wine and money, bread and sweets,
And can behead a sheep to make him meats.
These have not I. Who hath them, well is he.
Oh! pity one that is in poverty!

The garth is strewn with rose-leaves and each hill
With tulip and with hyacinth, and still

¹ Cf. p. 150.

The nightingale complaineth in the close,
And at its plaining burgeoneth the rose.
At night it never ceaseth to complain ;
The rose is overcharged by wind and rain.
I see the cloud's sighs and its tears, but why
The narciss should be sad I know not I.
The nightingale bemocketh rose and cloud ,
Perched on the rose it carolleth aloud.
I wist not which of them it holdeth dear,
But from the cloud a lion's roar I hear.
The cloud's robe sundereth and from its form
Fire flasheth, and the tear-drops of the storm
Bear witness for themselves upon the ground
Before the imperious sun Who shall expound
The descant of the nightingale, disclose
The purport of its quest beneath the rose ?
But mark it at the dawning of the day,
If thou wouldst list to its heroic lay,
Bewailing dead Asfandiyár, for he
Surviveth only in that threnody.
A-nights the cloud with Rustam's voice doth flaw
The heart of elephant and lion's claw.

V. 1631

PART III

THE STORY OF ASFANDIYÁR'S FIGHT WITH RUSTAM

ARGUMENT

Asfandiyár, finding that his father still is disinclined to abdicate, makes a formal application to him to do so. Gushtásp, having ascertained his son's destiny from the astrologers, sends him to bring Rustam in chains to court. Asfandiyár sets forth very unwillingly. Long negotiations with Rustam follow.

At length the two engage in single combat, and in the end Rustam, by the help of the Símurgh, is victorious. He brings up Asfandiyár's son, Bahman, at his own home. Gushtásp sends for Bahman, and appoints him to succeed to the throne.

NOTE

"A man there is," said Muhammad in the Kurán, "who buyeth an idle tale, that in his lack of knowledge he may mislead others from the way of God, and turn it to scorn.—For such is prepared a shameful punishment!"¹

The reference is to a certain merchant, Nadr the son of Hárith by name, who had brought back from the banks of the Euphrates the story of Rustam and Asfandiyár, and recited it to the inhabitants of Mecca, where it became for a time much more popular than Muhammad's own deliverances. The Prophet never forgave Nadr, who was one of the two prisoners put to death by him after the battle of Badr, A. D. 623. It is evident, therefore, that the story contained in this part was well established at the beginning of the seventh century of our era. Reference already has been made² to the compromise arrived at in Iránian legend between the conflicting claims of Rustam and Asfandiyár, and the reader will find it fully set out in the following pages.

§ 22. The Alwá slain by Núsh Ázar is identical probably with

¹ RK, 284

² p 116 *seq.*

the Alwá previously recorded to have been slain by Kámús.¹ They are both warriors and natives of Zábulistán, and the function of both is the same—to give the enemy a temporary triumph which is counteracted by the intervention of a stronger champion. Alwá reappears as we are dealing with a different legend.

§ 1

*How Asfandiyár ambitioned the Throne and how
Gushtásp took Counsel with the Astrologers*²

I heard a story from the nightingale,
Which it reciteth from the lays of old,
How, when Asfandiyár bemused with wine
Came forth in dudgeon from the royal palace,
His mother, Cæsar's daughter, Katáyún,
Took him to her embrace. When midnight came
He wakened from his drowse, called for the wine-cup,
And babbled to his mother, saying thus.—
“The Sháh is treating me injuriously.
He said: ‘When by thy valour thou shalt take
Revenge on king Arjúsp for Sháh Luhrásp,
Shalt free thy sisters from captivity,
And win us high renown throughout the world,
Shalt weed it utterly of malcontents,
And renovate it by thy labours, then
The whole realm and the army shall be thine,
And therewithal the treasure, throne, and crown.’
Now when the sky shall bring again the sun,
And when the Sháh shall wake, I will recall
His words to him; my rights must be asserted.
If he shall give to me the crown of kingship
I will adore him to idolatry;
But if he will not and his face shall frown
I swear by God, who stayeth up the sky,

V. 1632

¹ Vol. III. p. 188

² This heading is not in the original, which has merely “The Beginning of the Story.”

That I will place the crown on mine own head,
 And give the land and treasure to the people,
 Will make thee lady of Írán and do
 The deeds of lions with my strength and courage."

His mother sorrowed at his words. The silk
 Upon her turned to thorns. The famous Sháh,
 She knew, would give him not throne, crown, and treasure,
 And said to him: "What would thy princely heart
 Require yet of the world, my toil-worn son?
 The treasure, rule, and conduct of the host
 Thou hast already: seek for nothing more!
 Thy sire, my son! hath nothing but the crown,
 While thou hast all the troops and all the realm.
 How better were it for the savage Lion
 To stand before his sire with girded loins!
 When he departeth crown and throne are thine,
 Thine greatness, fortune, state."

Asfandiyár

Replied: "How goodly was the sage's saw!
 'Thy secret unto women ne'er confide,
 For thou wilt find it in the street outside;
 Moreover do not as she biddeth thee,
 For woman good at rede thou ne'er wilt see.'"

With frowning face and all abashed his mother
 Repented of her words. Asfandiyár,
 Howbeit, went not to Gushtásp but spent
 His time with minstrelsy and boon-companions.
 V. 1633 He drained the wine-cup for two nights and days,
 And took his ease among his moon-faced dames.

Gushtásp upon the third day was informed
 About his son's pretension to the state,
 That he was growing more resolved and needs
 Must have the Kaian crown and throne. Forthwith
 He called Jámásp and all Luhrásp's diviners.
 They came, their tablets on their breasts, and he
 Inquired about the brave Asfandiyár:—

"Is he to have long life? Will he abide
In peace, prosperity, and all delights?
Is he to wear the crown of king of kings,
And will the good and great rely on him?"

The wise man of Írán,¹ on hearing this,
Looked at his ancient astrologic tablets,
While sorrow filled the lashes of his eyes
With tears, and knowledge all his brow with frowns.
He said: "Ill are my days and ill my stars,
And knowledge bringeth ill upon my head.
Would fate had cast me to the lion's claws,
Preventing glorious Zarír, then I
Had not beheld him flung upon the ground,
All dust and blood, or would that mine own sire
Had slain me ere ill fortune reached Jámásp!
Although Asfandiyár in combat now
May rend a lion's heart by his attack;
Though he hath cleared the world of enemies,
And knoweth neither fear nor dread in fight,
Though he hath made the world to fear no foe,
And cloven the dragon's form in twain, hereafter
We shall have reason to lament for him,
And taste enough of woe and bitterness."

The Sháh exclaimed: "O admirable man!
Speak out and turn not from the path of knowledge.
If he shall fare as did the chief Zarír
To live will be henceforth an ill to me.
Come tell me instantly, for bitterness
Hath come upon me from my questioning,
Whose hand will slay him and so cause the pang
For which I needs must weep?"

V. 1634

Jámásp replied:—

"Will not ill fortune reach me too, O king?
His death will be within Zábulistán,
And at the hands of Zál's heroic son!"

¹ Jámásp.

The Sháh replied: "Give this affair due weight.
 If I resign to him the imperial throne,
 The treasure, and the crown of majesty,
 He will not even see Zábulistán,
 And none will know him in Kábulistán;
 He will be safe from every turn of fortune,
 And favouring stars will be his monitors."

The astrologer rejoined: "Who can escape
 The process of the sky? None can avoid
 By courage or by might the sharp-clawed Dragon
 Above our heads. What is to be will be
 Past doubt, the when the wise seek not to know
 Although Surúsh be lying at his feet
 The prince will perish by a great man's hand!"

The monarch mused, his mind a brake of thoughts;
 He pondered on the processes of time,
 Which in their turn instructed him in crime.

§ 2

How Asfandiyár demanded the Kingdom from his Father

When night had gathered up its reins and gone,
 And when the dawn had raised its shining spear,
 The Sháh sat down upon the throne of gold,
 And glorious Asfandiyár approached.
 v. 1635 He stood before the presence of his sire
 In deep concern, slave-like with folded arms,
 And when the throng of warriors and nobles
 Had gathered round the Sháh, and when the archmagos
 Were ranged in line before his throne, and when
 The captains of the host stood ranked before him,
 Asfandiyár, the elephantine chief,
 Began to vent his grievances, and said:—
 'O Sháh! live evermore. ` Upon the earth
 The Grace of God is thine. Through thee are love

"For justice manifest, and crown and throne
 Adorned. A slave am I to thee, my sire!
 And run to do thy will. Thou knowest how
 Arjásp came hither for religion's sake
 With cavaliers from Chín, while I had sworn
 A mighty oath e'en as God prompted me—
 'Whoever shall make wreckage of the Faith,
 And give his heart to idol-worshipping,
 Him will I smite asunder and fear none.'
 So when Arjásp came forth to war I shrank not
 From fighting that fierce Leopard; yet didst thou
 Disgrace me at the instance of Gurazm,
 When quaffing royally upon a feast-day,
 Didst put my body into heavy bonds,
 And blacksmiths riveted my chains and fetters,
 Didst send me to the hold of Gumbadán,
 And give me up to strangers in contempt.
 On quitting Balkh thou wentest to Zábul,
 Regarding warfare merely as a feast,
 And though consigning Sháh Luhrásp to death
 Beheldest not the falchion of Arjásp.
 Jámásp, when he arrived, saw me in bonds,
 And scathed thereby, assured to me the realm
 And throne, and pleaded much. I said to him—
 'These heavy chains, these columns, and these shackles
 By blacksmiths riveted, will I display
 To God upon the Great Day of Account,
 And cry to Him against the evil-doer.'
 He said to me: 'The blood of all our princes—
 Men of high rank and armed with massive maces—
 Shot down by arrows on the battlefield;
 Thy sisters carried captive; Farshidward,
 The noble warrior, o'erthrown and wounded
 Upon the field of battle; and the Sháh
 Himself in flight before the Turkmans, writhing
 At having put Asfandiyár in bonds—

Is not thy heart on fire at things like these,
 And all this travail, grief, and misery ?
 He added much—words fraught with grief and anguish.
 I burst my yoke and bonds, and came apace
 Before the ruler of the flock. I slew
 Unnumbered foes ; the Sháh approved my deeds
 If I should speak about the Seven Stages
 Good sooth ! I ne'er should end I glorified
 The name of Sháh Gushtásp, I took the head
 Off from Arjásp and brought his wife and children,
 His crown and throne and treasure, to this court.
 The goods thou placed'st in the treasury ;
 My capital was blood, my profit toil.
 Thou wast so full of promise, oath, and pledge
 That I more readily performed thy bidding.
 Thou said'st : ' If I shall look on thee again
 I will esteem thee dearer than my soul,
 And give thee diadem and ivory throne,
 Because thy courage meriteth the crown.'
 Now I am shamed before the mighty men,
 Who say : ' Where are thy treasures and thy host ?'
 What pretext hast thou ? What is my position ?
 For what end have I gone through all the toil ?
 It is the part of Sháhs to keep their word ;
 They do not break their bonds and covenants.
 Now therefore set the crown on thy son's head
 As thine own father crowned thee in his stead."

V. 1637

§ 3

How Gushtásp answered his Son

The Sháh replied : " 'Tis ill to turn from right.
 Till now thou hast been better than thy word :
 The Maker of the world be thine ally.
 I see not at this present anywhere

A public or a private foe. What man
 Shall catch thy name and shall not writhe thereat ?
 Did I say writhe ? Nay verily not live !
 Thou hast no peer except the worshipful
 And famous son of Zál, who hath for life
 Zábulistán, Kábulistán, Ghaznín
 And Bust, and is exalted o'er the sky
 In valour, but accounteth not himself
 A subject and transgresseth my commands
 And counsels, stooping not to league with me
 Although he was a slave to Kai Káuś,
 And was devoted unto Kai Khusrau,
 But sayeth of the kingship of Gushtásp :—
 ' He hath a new crown while my crown is old '

Now thou hast not a rival in the world
 Midst Rúmans, Turkmans, or our own free folk,
 And must set forward to Sístán forthwith,
 And put in practice colour, force, and guile,
 Lay bare the sword and mace, and bring me Rustam,
 The son of Zál, Zawára, Farúmarz,
 In bonds and suffer none to mount the saddle.
 Then by the Judge of all the world, the Source
 Of strength, who kindleth star and moon and sun,
 Then by the Zandavasta and Zarduhsht,
 The good religion, and by Núsh Ázar,
 The Fire and Grace divine, as soon as thou
 Accomplishest these things thou shalt not hear
 Of further opposition at my hands,
 But I will give thee treasure, throne, and casque,
 And seat thee crowned upon the state myself."

V. 1638

Asfandiyár replied : " O worshipful
 And noble Sháh ! thou quitt'st the ancient rule ;
 Thou shouldst speak measured words. Fight with the
 king
 Of Chín and send dust from his warriors,
 But wherefore fight against an aged man,

Whom Kai Káuś dubbed 'Lion-capturer'²
 From Minúchihīr as far as Kai Kubád
 The whole state of Írán rejoiced in him.
 Men called him: 'Lord of Rakhsh,' 'World-conqueror,'
 'King-maker,' 'Lion-queller.' He is great;
 His fame is not a new thing in the world;
 He hath his patent from Sháh Kai Khusrau,
 And if the patents of the Sháhs are void
 One should not seek for patents from Gushtásp!³

The Sháh replied: "My famed, illustrious son!
 Whoe'er hath turned him from the way of God,
 His patent is as is the desert-wind.

V. 1639

Thou surely must have heard how Sháh Káuś
 Went erring at the bidding of Iblís
 And, having scaled the sky on eagles' wings,
 Fell vilely into water at Sári.¹

He brought a dív's child from Hámávarán,
 And made her mistress in the royal bower.²

By her malpractice Siyáwush was slain,
 The day departed from his family.³

It is not well to pass the gate of one
 That turneth from his fealty to God.

If thou art eager for the crown and throne
 Lead forth the host and hie thee to Sístán.

Upon arriving there bind Rustam's hands,
 And bring him with the lasso on thine arm.

As for Zawára, Farámarz, and Zál,

See that they set no traps upon thy way.

Bring them afoot and running to my court,

And bring them so that all the troops may see,

Then none hereafter will revolt from us

However he may wish it and repugn."

The chieftain frowned. "Go not about," he said,
 "To compass such designs, for neither Zál
 Nor Rustam is in question here, but thou

¹ See Vol. II. p. 102 *seq.* ² *Id.* p. 86 *seq.* ³ *Id.* p. 200 *seq.*

Wouldst rid thee of Asfandiyár, thou art
 Concerned about the throne of empiry,
 And wouldst be quit of me. Let crown and throne
 Of chiefs remain thine own, for me the world
 Hath nooks enough, yet I am still thy slave,
 And bow my head to thy command and will."

Gushtásp said: "Be not angry. Thou shalt have
 This greatness yet and therefore be not downcast
 Choose from the army many cavaliers—
 All veterans in war. At thy disposal
 Are implements of war and troops and money,
 'Tis for thy foemen to despond. Without thee
 What are the treasure and the host, the throne
 Of kingship and the golden casque, to me?"

V. 1640

Asfandiyár replied: "No host will serve;
 The world-lord, if my fate is drawing nigh,
 Will not withhold it with his troops!"

He quitted

The presence of his sire with indignation
 Both for the crown's sake and his father's words,
 And entered his own hall in doleful wise,
 His heart all sorrowful, his lips all sighs.

§ 4

How Katáyún counselled Asfandiyár

Much moved and weeping sun-checked Katáyún
 Went to the glorious Asfandiyár,
 Her son, and said to him. "O thou that art
 The memory of the heroes of the world!
 Bahman hath told me that thou wouldest go
 From this Rose-garden to Zábulistán,
 And wilt put Rustam, son of Zál, in chains,
 That master of the mace and scimitar!
 Now hear of all things what thy mother saith:—

Rush not to evil and endeavour it not.
 That cavalier of elephantine might
 Disdaineth battle with the river Nile,
 Dis-sundereth the White Dív's liverstead,
 And maketh with his sword the sun to stray.
 He slew the monarch of Hámávarán
 Withal, and none is bold to chide with him.
 V. 1641 When he took vengeance on Afrásiyâb
 For Siyáwush he made earth like a sea
 With blood. But if I were to talk for ever
 I could not tell the tale of his good deeds.
 Give not thy head for crown's sake to the winds,
 For no one yet was born already crowned.
 Thy father is an old man; thou art young—
 A mighty man of hardihood and valour.
 The whole host's eyes are on thee, plunge not then
 Thyself through anger in calamities.
 Sístán is not the sole place in the world,
 Act not the youth and be not masterful.
 Make me not sad in this world and the next,
 But hearken to thy loving mother's words."

Asfandiyár replied: "O loving mother!
 Heed what I say. thou knowest Rustam well,
 And what thou say'st of his accomplishment
 Is true as Zandavasta. Thou mayst search
 At large throughout Írán but wilt not find
 A better man; 'twould be a shame to bind him.
 Such ill, not good, proceedeth from the Sháh!
 But still there is no need to break my heart,
 Though if thou dost so I will tear it out.
 How can I disobey the Sháh's command,
 Forego a state like this? Grant that my life
 Shall finish in Zábul; 'tis Heaven's process
 V. 1642 That draweth me thither, and if Rustam yieldoth
 He ne'er will hear unfriendly words from me."

His mother's eyes rained blood, she tore her hair,

And cried : " O mighty, raging Elephant !
 Strength maketh thee too prodigal of life.
 Thou art no match for elephantine Rustam,
 And therefore go not hence without a host.
 Take not thy life, on thine own shoulders merely,
 To that fierce Elephant, thy will to go
 Is also miscreant Áhriman's for thee.
 Oh pause ! Take not thy children into Hell,
 Or no wise man will call thee well-advised."

The warlike prince made answer : " Not to take them
 Would be unwise, for while a youth remaineth
 Within the bower his spirit is repressed,
 His mind is dark, and, O my prudent mother !
 I want their help on every battlefield.
 There is no need for me to take a host,
 Just kith and kin and certain chiefs at most."

V. 1643

§ 5

How Asfandiyār led a Host to Zābul

At dawn, at cock-crow, from the court-gate rose
 The din of drums, the elephantine chief
 Gat on his steed and led his powers like wind.
 He marched until he came where two roads met ;
 Then prince and army halted in dismay.
 One road led toward the hold of Gumbadān,
 The other toward Zābul. The leading camel
 Lay down, thou hadst said " wedded to the ground."
 The camel-driver smote it on the head,
 But for the while the caravan was stayed.
 It seemed ill-omened to the atheling,
 Who gave commandment to behead the beast
 So that the harm might come upon itself,
 And he himself not lose the Grace of God.
 The warriors cut its head off on the spot,

And turned forthwith the presage on the camel.
Though vexed about the beast, Asfandiyár
Affected to disdain the evil omen,
And said : " When one hath triumphed, and illumed
Earth by his fortune and his eminence,
He ought to smile since good and ill alike
Derive from God."

He then fared toward the Hírmund,
But fearful of mishap. As they were wont
They pitched the tent-enclosure while the chiefs
Chose their own camping-ground. The prince set up
Throne and pavilion ; thither fared the favoured.
Asfandiyár provided wine and minstrels,
And he and Bishútan sat down together,
V 1644 Rejoicing his own heart with song and filling
His nobles' hearts with bluster. When old wine
Had made the faces of the warrior-king
And of his lords to blossom like the rose
He said thus to his friends " I have abandoned
The Sháh's injunctions and his way withal.
He said : ' Get this affair of Rustam's over :
Bate naught of bondage and humiliation.'
I have not acted as my father bade me,
Because the brave and lion-hearted Rustam
Hath many toils in other chieftains' stead
To his account and with his massive mace
Reformed the world. The whole state of Írán
From Sháh to slave surviveth to this day
Through him. I need a valiant messenger,
Instructed, wise, and of retentive mind,
A cavalier of Grace divine and lustre,
A man that Rustam will not over-reach.
If Rustam will come hither and illum
My gloomy soul, by graciously allowing me
To bind him, he shall not experience
For his discretion any harm from me.

I wish him well if he will think no ill."

"That is the proper course," said Bishútán,
 "Hold thereunto and seek the hurt of none."

§ 6

How Asfandiyár sent Bahman to Rustam

Asfandiyár then summoned to his presence
 Bahman, held talk with him at large, and said —
 "Array thee in brocade of Chín and mount
 Thy sable steed, wear too a royal crown,
 Bedecked with jewels fit for paladins,
 So that whoever seeth may discern thee
 Among the notables and, recognising
 That thou art one of royal race, invoke
 The Maker's blessings on thee. Take five steeds
 With golden trappings, and ten archinages,
 All men of reputation and degree,
 Proceed to Rustam's house, and do thine errand
 With right good will. Greet him from us, be kind,
 Address him, adding compliments, and say:—
 'Let him that groweth great and keepeth all
 The world unscathed give thanks to God that He
 At all times recogniseth excellence;
 Howbeit one that is both great and good,
 And keepeth his own heart from frowardness,
 Will find his might and riches all the more,
 Be happy in this Hostel by the way,
 And, by renouncing every sordid aim,
 Hereafter compass Paradise. With us
 Both good and evil are but transient things
 As all of wisdom know. Dark dust at last
 Will be our couch, our spirit wing to God.
 Those that know Him will toil to serve the Sháhs.
 And now let us appraise thee faithfully

V. 1645

Without exaggeration or default,
 For thou hast lived through countless years and seen
 Full many a king on earth. Thou know'st that 'tis
 Unseemly to hark back from wisdom's way
 For thee who hast such greatness, troops, and treasure,
 Such noble horses, crown, and throne, all which
 Thou hadst from my forefathers for prompt service;
 Yet for how long did Sháh Luhrásp possess
 The world and yet thou never cam'st to court!
 And since he gave the kingdom to Gushtásp
 Thou hast not recognised the Sháh, not written,
 Or paid to him the customary service,
 Hast never gone to court to do him homage,¹
 Or hailed him as thy Sháh. Yet from Húshang,
 Jamshíd, and Faridún who won by valour
 The kingship from the offspring of Zabhák,
 Until we reach the time of Kai Kubád,
 Who set the crown of greatness on his head,
 There hath not been a monarch like Gushtásp
 In fight, in feast, in counsel or the chase.
 He hath received the pure and good religion,
 Both error and injustice are no more,
 For when the Lord's way shone forth gloriously
 Bad doctrine and the Dív's way disappeared.
 Thereafter when Arjásp came forth to fight,
 With troops like pards and chiefs like crocodiles,
 And no one knew the number of his host,
 Our famous sovereign encountered him,
 And made a graveyard of the battlefield,
 Till no one could discern the face of earth.
 In sooth until the Resurrection Day
 The tale will ne'er grow old among the great.
 He is the man to break a lion's neck,
 And everything is his from east to west,
 His from Túrán as far as Sind and Rúm;

V. 1646

¹ Reading with C and P.

The whole world is a bit of wax to him.
Among the spearmen of the desert too
Full many cavaliers come to his court;
They send him toll and tribute from their realms,
Because they have not strength to fight with him.
This have I said to thee, O paladin!
Because his soul is vexed on thine account
In that thou hast not come to his famed court,
Nor recognised his nobles, but hast chosen
A nook wherein thou hid'st thyself; yet how,
Unless they ban all feeling, can our chiefs
Cease to remember thee who hast done good
In all things alway and hast raised thy head
To do the bidding of the Sháhs? If any
Should reckon up thy toils they would exceed
Thy treasures; yet no Sháh could acquiesce
In what is told of thee. Gushtásp said: "Rustam,
Because of much goods, province, and stored treasure, V. 1647
Hath tarried at Zábul and grown bemused
With drink, and none hath profit from a drunkard.
Though wanted he is absent from the field,
And doth not see me even at festivals."
The Sháh was wroth and sware an oath one day
By bright day and the azure dim of night:—
"None of this chosen host shall look on him
Here in the court unless in bonds." And now
Upon this matter have I left Írán;
The Sháh would not allow me time to breathe.
Be circumspect and shun the monarch's wrath:
Hast thou not seen the fury in his eyes?
If thou wilt come, obeying my command
And mourning thy remissness in the past,
Then by the sun, the bright soul of Zarír,
And by that noble Lion my father's life,
I swear that I will make the Sháh repent,
And cause the moon and stars to shine again.

Moreover Bishútan will bear me witness
 That, having mind and wisdom for my guides,
 I oftentimes have tried to pacify
 The Sháh, though seeing that thou wast to blame
 My father is the lord, I am the liege,
 And never will I swerve from his command.
 A conclave of thy family should sit,
 Consult, and take this matter well in hand.
 Allow Zawára, Farámarz, and Zál,
 As well as noble and discreet Rúdába,
 To hear what I advise in all respects,
 And recognise the goodness of my words.
 This house must not be wrecked and be the den
 Of pards and lions When I bear thee bound
 Before the Sháh I will set forth to him
 Thy many faults, then rise and bring him back
 From wrath and wreak, let no wind blow on thee,
 But act as native worth would have of me.'"

§ 7

How Bahman came to Zál

- V. 1648 Bahman, or ever he had heard the words
 Of that illustrious prince, went on his way.
 He donned a robe of royal cloth of gold,
 And placed the crown of greatness on his head,
 Then set forth proudly from the camp-enclosure
 With standard raised and fluttering behind him.
 The atheling went over the Hírmund—
 A noble youth upon a mighty steed.
 Immediately the watchman sighted him,
 And sent a cry toward Zábulistán :—
 "A gallant, warlike cavalier hath come
 Upon a sable steed with golden trappings.
 Behind him are attendant cavaliers,
 And he hath passed in safety o'er the stream."

Zál mounted on his saddle instantly,
With lasso in the straps and mace in hand,
Then coming to the watch-tower saw Bahman,
And from his liver drew a deep, cold sigh.
He said: "This is a famous paladin
Of noble rank clad in a royal robe.
In sooth he is a kinsman of Luhrásp,
And may his advent prove our country's weal"

Departing from the watch-tower he approached
The gate and paused distracted on his saddle.

It was not long before Bahman, whose head
Was higher than the turning sky, appeared
And, having no acquaintance yet with Zál,
Waved with his royal arm, and then approaching
Cried: "Noblethane! where is the son of Zál,
This people's lord, the backbone of our times,
For great Asfandiyár hath reached Zábúl,
And pitched his tents upon the river-bank?"

Zál said to him: "O mine impetuous son!
Dismount, take wine, and rest, for Rustam now
Is coming from the chase with Farámarz,
Zawára, and their retinue. Come then
With these thy cavaliers as honoured guests,
And cheer thy heart with many a draught of wine."

Bahman made answer thus: "Asfandiyár
Enjoined not minstrelsy and boon-companions.
Give me a guide to take me to the chase."

Zál said: "What is thy name? Thou art in haste!
What is thy will? Methinketh that thou art
A scion of Gushtásp or Sháh Luhrásp."

Bahman replied to him: "I am Bahman,
Son of the world-lord of the brazen body."

Then noble Zál dismounted and did homage.
Bahman alighted smiling, and the twain
Exchanged their greetings. Earnestly Zál pleaded:—
'Wait here, there is no colour for such haste.'

Bahman rejoined "Not thus must we delay,
And slight the mission of Asfandiyár."

Zál chose a warrior that knew the road,
And sent him with Bahman forth to the chase.
That veteran, hight Shírkhún, went first as guide,
Just pointed to the spot and homeward hied.

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§ 8

How Bahman gave the Message to Rustam

A mountain lay before the youth who urged
His gallant charger thither, then looked down
Upon the chase. The captain of the host
Appeared in sight—a man like Mount Bístún.
He held a sapling in one hand whereon
An onager was spitted. By his side
Were placed his iron mace and other gear.
Within his other hand he held a goblet
A-brim with wine; his son was in attendance,
Rakhsh roamed about the meadow. There were trees,
Grass, and a stream withal.

V. 1650

"'Tis either Rustam,"

Bahman said, "or the rising sun, for none
In all the world hath looked on such another,
Or heard of such from famous men of old.
I fear me that the brave Asfandiyár
Will not stand up to him, but quit the combat.
So let me kill him with a crag and make
The hearts of Zál and of Rúdába writhe."

He loosed a flinty boulder from the height,
And sent it downward from the lofty peak.
Zawára from the hunting-ground beheld it,
And heard the rumble that it made withal.
He shouted. "Paladin and cavalier!
A stone is rolling from the mountain-top!"

But Rustam to Zawára's wonderment
Ne'er moved nor laid aside the onager,
He waited till the stone was close to him,
While all the mountain darkened by its dust,
Then with a kick dispatched it far away,
Whereat Zawára praised him joyfully.
Bahman was sick at heart at Rustam's deed
And, marking both his majesty and mien,
Said: "If the glorious Asfandiyár
Should fight against a man of such renown
He would be vanquished vilely. It were better
For him to deal with Rustam courteously,
Who, if he overcame Asfandiyár,
Would seize on all the country of Írán."

He gat upon his wind-swift steed and quitted
The mountain in a muse, informed the archmages
About the wonder that he had beheld,
And quietly proceeded on his way.
When he was hard upon the hunting-ground
The peerless Rustam spied him as he came,
And asked an archimage: "What man is this?
I take him for a kinsman of Gushtásp."

V. 1651

Then Rustam with Zawára and the rest,
Both great and small, went forth to meet Bahman,
Who swift as smoke alighted from his steed,
Exchanging greetings and all courtesies,
And Rustam said to him: "Until thou tellest
Thy name thou wilt not get thy will of me."

The youth replied: "Renowned Bahman am I,
Son of Asfandiyár, that upright prince."

The paladin embraced him on the spot,
And made excuses for his tardy coming.
Then both with their respective retinues
Set forth for Rustam's camp. Now when Bahman
Was seated he gave greetings for himself
And for the Sháh and the Íránians.

"Asfandiyár," he then went on to say,
 "Hath journeyed from the court as quick as fire
 And, as the Sháh, victorious and exalted,
 Enjoined him, pitched his camp on the Hírmund.
 Now if the noble cavalier will hear me
 I have a message from Asfandiyár."

"The Sháh's son," Rustam answered, "hath endured
 Much and hath travelled far; so first of all
 Let us partake of what we have, and then
 The world is at thy bidding"

On the board

He laid new bread and hot roast onager;
 Slaves helped Bahman and matchless Rustam parled.
 He placed his brother by the prince but summoned
 No other nobles to the feast. He put
 A second onager before himself—
 His customary portion at each meal.
 He sprinkled salt, cut up the meat, and ate;
 Meanwhile the exalted prince could not but gaze.
 He ate a little of his onager,
 But not a hundredth part of Rustam's meal,
 While Rustam smiled upon him, saying: "Sháhs
 Possess the state in order to enjoy.
 If thou art such a feeble trencherman
 How ever didst thou pass the Seven Stages?
 In what sort dost thou wield the spear in battle
 Who hast, O prince! so little appetite?"

Bahman said: "God forbid a prince should talk
 Or eat much. Eating little he is great
 In war and ever hath his life in hand."

Then Rustam smiled and cried: "One should not veil
 One's manhood from mankind."

Then he filled up

A golden bowl with wine and drank "The free."
 He gave another to Bahman, and said:—
 "Take this and drink it unto whom thou wilt."

Bahman was frayed thereat, and so Zawára
First took a draught thereof and said to him :—
“ O scion of the Sháh ! may wine and drinker
Rejoice in thee.”

Bahman took back the bowl
At once, but that sweet youth was temperate,
And Rustam's appetite, neck, arms, and shoulders
Astounded him. Both mounted, and Bahman
Set forth with noble Rustam and then gave
The message of the prince fair-famed and brave,

§ 9

How Rustam made Answer to Asfandiyár

When he had heard Bahman the ancient hero
Mused and replied : “ Yea I have heard the message
And joy to see thee. Bear Asfandiyár
This answer from me : ‘ Lion-hearted chief
And famed ! the man whose soul is tenanted
By wisdom seeth matters in the gross,
And when he hath both valour and success,
Possessions, hoarded treasures, majesty,
With heroism and a lofty name,
And is the favourite of noble men,
As thou art at this moment in the world,
Should not be evil-minded. Let us worship
God and the right, not grasp the hand of ill.
A word when uttered inexcusably
Is but a tree that hath no fruit or scent,
And if thy soul shall tread the path of greed
Thy travail will be long and profitless.
'Tis well a prince should weigh his words, and well
To have no wish to utter aught amiss.
Thy servant used to joy in all that said :—
“ No mother's son is like Asfandiyár.

In courage, wisdom, enterprise, and counsel
 He will be greater than his ancestors."
 How famous is thy name in Hindústán,
 In Chín and Rúm and in the land of warlocks !
 I thank thee for thy counsels and give praise
 By day and in three watches of the night.
 I sought of God, what now I joy to find
 Accorded me, that I might look upon
 Thy cherished face, thy greatness, manhood, love,
 That, seated side by side in joy, we twain
 Might drain a goblet to the king of kings,
 And now I have attained my whole desire—
 The wish that I was instant to achieve.
 I will appear before thee unattended
 To hear from thee the Sháh's behest and bring
 To thee the patents granted by just Sháhs
 From Kai Khusrau right back to Kai Kubád.
 Now, matchless hero ! look upon my case,
 My pains and actions, on the goodly deeds
 That I have done, my hardship and my travail,
 And how I have been servant to the Sháhs
 From this day backward to the days of old
 If chains are to repay me for these toils,
 And ruin from the monarch of Irán,
 'Tis well for none to look upon the world,
 Or only just to look and tarry not.
 I will tell all my secrets when I come,
 And speak in tones that all the world may hear.
 Then if there should appear a fault in me—
 A fault for which I ought to lose my head—
 Then I will set a yoke on mine own shoulders,
 And come afoot clothed in a leopard-skin ;
 But inasmuch as I am he that brake
 Fierce elephants' necks and flung them to the Nile,
 Forbear unseemly words to me and keep
 Thy mischiefs to afflict the Dív's heart. Say not

What no one e'er hath said, use not thy courage
To enrage the wind The mighty cannot pass
Through fire at all, nor, save they swim, through water;
Thou canst not hide the shining of the moon,
Or mate the fox and lion. Pour not then
Contention o'er my path, who am myself
Adept therein. None hath beheld me fettered,
No savage lion ta'en my post. Act thou
As princes should. Consult not with the Div.
Put from thy heart wrath and revenge for trifles,
And look not on the world with boyish eyes.
Rejoice then, cross the stream, and may God bless thee.
Do honour to my mansion at a feast,
Keep not aloof from me who am thy slave.
Just as I was a liege to Kai Kubád,
So now I joy, both heart and brain, in thee.
If thou wilt come to me with all thy host,
And pass two months with me in merriment,
Both man and beast shall rest from toil, foes' hearts
Grow blind with envy. Beast on land, and fowl
On water, wait thee if thou wilt but stay.
I shall behold thy warrior-might, and thou
Shalt with thy scimitar o'erthrow the lion
And pard. When thou art fain to lead the host
Íránward to the monarch of the brave,
I will unlock the ancient hoards which I
Have here collected by my scimitar,
And place at thy disposal everything
That I have gathered by my might of hand.
Take what thou wilt and give the rest away;
Make not a day like this a grief to me.
Then when the time shall come for thee to go,
And thou art anxious to behold the Sháh,
I will not separate my reins from thine,
And we will go to him in company.
By asking pardon I will soothe his wrath,

And kiss him on the head and feet and eyes.
 Then will I ask the great but unjust Sháh :—
 “Why should these hands of mine be put in bonds ?”
 Retain my words in each particular,
 And tell them to the great Asfandiyár.”

§ 10

How Bahman returned

Bahman, when he had heard what Rustam said,
 Departed with the holy archimages,
 But Rustam—peerless chieftain—stayed awhile
 Upon the road and, having called Zawára
 And Farámarz, said thus : “Depart to Zál
 And to the fair Moon of Zábulistán,¹
 And say to them : “One who ambitioneth
 The world hath come—Asfandiyár. Set up
 Within our halls a golden throne, and place
 For him apparel such as monarchs wear,
 As on the occasion with Sháh Kai Káús,²
 But let the audience-hall be grander still.
 Prepare ye somewhat too by way of food :
 There must not be a lack of things to eat,
 For the Sháh’s son hath come to us, hath come
 In a revengeful mood intent on war.
 He is a famous warrior and brave prince,
 And heedeth not a wilderness of lions.
 I go to him, and if he will accept
 Mine invitation there is hope for all.
 If I shall find him well disposed toward me
 I will present him with a crown of rubies,
 And not withhold from him my treasures, jewels,
 Bards, mace, and sword. If I return despondent,
 Because I have not a white day with him,

V. 1656

¹ *I.e.* Rudába.² Vol. ii. p 83.

Thou knowest that my twisted lasso bringeth
The heads of savage elephants to bonds”

Zawāra said to him : “ Have no such thought :
Men do not seek to fight without a cause.
I know not any king in all the world
For rede and courage like Asfandiyār ,
Ill deeds proceed not from a man of wisdom,
And he hath not received a wrong from us.”

Zawāra went to Zāl. For his part Rustam,
Bestirred himself and hurried to the Hīrmund,
His head all dazed with fear of coming ill,
Drew rein and waited for Bahman to greet him.

Now when Bahman had reached the tent-enclosure,
And stood before the presence of his father,
The glorious Asfandiyār inquired :—
“ What answer did the famous hero give thee ? ”

Bahman, on hearing, sat before his sire,
Narrated all his tidings point by point,
And, having given Rustam’s greeting first,
Told all about the message and reply
Before his father, told what he had seen,
Or noted privily. “ I never saw,”
He said, “ in any company a man
Like elephantine Rustam. He possesseth
A lion’s heart, the bulk of elephant,
And haleth from the Nile the crocodiles.
He now is on the bank of Hīrmund,
Without his armour, helmet, mace, or lasso,
And fain would see the Shāh. I do not know
His purpose as to thee.”

Asfandiyār,

V. 1657

Wroth with Bahman, disgraced him in full court,
And said to him : “ Men of exalted rank
Should not confide in women ; furthermore
The employ of children in affairs of moment
As messengers is neither brave nor valiant.

Where ever hast thou looked on warriors,
 Who hast heard not a charger's tramp? By making
 An elephant of war of Rustam thou
 Wilt break the spirit of our famous host."

In private he spake much to Bishútán,
 And said: "This noble Lion of the fight
 Will act the youngster and, I will engage,
 Hath not a wrinkle yet in spite of age!"

§ 11

The Meeting of Rustam and Asfandiyár

The glorious Asfandiyár bade set
 A golden saddle on his sable steed;
 Then from his famous troops a hundred horsemen
 Set forth with him. His charger neighed on one hand,
 And Rakhsh upon the other. Matchless Rustam
 Lit from his steed, advanced to greet the hero,
 And, greeting over, said: "I prayed to God—
 The only God—that He would be thy Guide,
 And thou with thy great men and troops withal
 Hast reached us safe and sound. Come let us sit,
 Use gracious terms, then give a good reply.
 My witness, be assured, is God himself,
 And wisdom is my guide in what I say,
 For I shall gain no glory from this matter,
 Nor will I tell a lie in any case,
 That now were I to gaze on Siyáwush
 I should not look so happy as I do,
 For thou resemblest nobody but him,
 That wearer of the crown, that world-bestower.
 Blest is the Sháh who hath a son like thee!
 Thy sire may glory in thy height and face.
 Blest are the people of Írán, the slaves
 Of thine unsleeping fortune and thy throne.
 Ill-starred is he who seeketh thee in fight:

From throne and fortune he will come to dust.
 May all foes' hearts be filled with fear of thee,
 And thine ill-wishers' riven, may thy fortune
 Prevail through all thy years and thy dark nights
 Be as the day to thee."

Asfandiyár

Thereat alighted from his royal steed,
 Embraced the hero's elephantine form,
 Called many blessings down on him, and said :—
 "Thank God, O chief of paladins ! that I
 Behold thee glad and bright of mind. 'Tis well
 That we should praise thee and that this world's heroes
 Should be as dust before thee. He is blest
 That hath a son like thee, for he beholdeth
 A fruitful Branch, and blest is he that hath
 A stay like thee, for he will be unscathed
 By evil fortune ! When I looked on thee
 I called to mind that leader of the host,
 That cavalier and Lion—Zarír."

Then Rustam :—

"Thou paladin and world-lord shrewd and ardent !
 I have one wish, O prince ! a wish which granted
 Would make me well content, and 'tis that thou
 Shalt visit me in state and make my soul
 Bright at the sight of thee. Though there be naught
 Worth thine acceptance we will do our best."

Asfandiyár replied : "Thou memory
 Of this world's heroes ! he that hath a name
 Like thine will prove a joyance to Írán
 As one whose counsel must not be transgressed,
 His land and home not slighted. Ne'ertheless,
 I may not swerve in public or in private
 From what the Sháh commanded, and he did not
 Instruct me to abide within Zábul,
 Or with the nobles of that warlike land.
 Act so that thou mayst take of fortune's fruit ;

V. 1659

Go thou the way the monarch biddeth thee.
 Delay not thou to put thy feet in fetters ;
 Those of the king of kings are no disgrace,
 And when I bear thee bound before the Sháh
 The evil will recoil on him. Meanwhile
 Thy bondage will have hurt me to the soul,
 I shall have waited on thee like a slave
 I will not leave thee in thy bonds till night ;¹
 No harm at all shall come upon thy life.
 Dost thou suspect foul play, O paladin ?
 Beyond all doubt the Sháh will do no wrong,
 And he hath told me : ‘ I will give to thee
 Mine ivory throne, my treasures, and my crown.’
 When I shall set that crown upon my head
 I will entrust the whole world to thy hands.
 Before the all-just God I do no wrong,
 Nor shall I shame in presence of the Sháh.
 When thou returnest to Zábulistán,
 What time the gardens blossom with the rose,
 Thou shalt receive such precious gifts from me
 As will adorn thy land.”

“ O noble man ! ”

Said Rustam, “ I have prayed the almighty Judge
 That I might glad my heart by seeing thee,
 But how can I give ear to these thy words ?
 We both are men of rank, one old, one young,
 Two paladins both wise and vigilant ;
 But I am fearful of the evil eye,
 And that our heads will wake from pleasant dreams.
 The Dív is making way betwixt us two
 To warp thy heart by means of crown and throne.
 A thing like this would be a shame to me,
 One that would last for ever, that a leader,
 One high-born and a chieftain such as thou art,

¹ The night of the day on which Rustam should be brought before the Sháh.

A noble Lion and a mighty man,
 Should come not for a while to mine abode,
 Or be my guest within these coasts. If thou
 Wilt banish this contention from thy thoughts,
 And do thy best to exorcise the Div,
 I will adorn my soul by sight of thee,
 And do whate'er thou biddest save these bonds,
 For they are utter shame, defeat, and outrage.
 No one shall see me bound while I survive :
 My life on that Enough !”

V. 1660

Asfandiyár

Replied : “ O memory of this world's heroes !
 Thy words are truth, not falsehood, and men gain
 No lustre from deceit ; still Bishútan
 Is cognisant of all the Sháh's commands
 When I set forth. ‘ Bestir thyself,’ he said,
 ‘ As touching Rustam. Be thy whole concern
 To fight or bind him.’ If now I shall go,
 A blithe, triumphant guest, to visit thee
 In thine own home, and from the Sháh's commands
 Thou turn thy neck, ’twill mar mine own day's lustre.
 For one thing I shall fight thee and employ
 The leopard's instinct in that fight, forget
 The bond of bread and salt, and cast a slur
 Upon the honour of my lineage ;
 While if I disobey the Sháh the fire
 Will be my dwelling in the world to come.
 Yet, since thou wishest, let us pass one day
 With wine in hand. Who knoweth what may chance
 Tomorrow, so we need not talk thereof ? ”
 Said Rustam : “ I will do so. I will go
 And doff my road-dress. For a week have I
 Been hunting and been eating onager
 Instead of lamb. When things are ready call me,
 And sit down with thy kinsmen at the board.”

V. 1661

Hurt and concerned he mounted, hurried home,

Beheld the face of Zál, the son of Sám,
 The son of Narímán, and said : " Famed chief !
 I have been visiting Asfandiyár,
 And seen a horseman like a straight-stemmed cypress,
 A man of wisdom, dowered with grace and Glory.
 Thou wouldest say : ' Sháh Farídún, the hero,
 Bequeathed to him both might and understanding.'
 His presence bettereth hearsay : there doth shine
 From him the Grace imperial and divine."

§ 12

How Asfandiyár summoned not Rustam to the Feast

When Rustam left the bank of the Hírmund
 The great Asfandiyár sat lost in thought,
 And Bishútan, his counsellor, anon
 Came to the camp-enclosure. Said the hero :—
 " We have dealt lightly with a grave affair :
 I have no business in the house of Rustam,
 And he for his part should not look on me.
 If he come not I will not summon him ;
 Else, should one of us die, the other's heart
 Would burn with anguish for the slain, his head
 Shed tears for friendship's sake."

Said Bishútan :—

" Who hath a brother like Asfandiyár,
 Famed chief ? By God, when first I saw you two,
 And neither of you tried to make a quarrel,
 My heart became like early spring thereat,
 As much for Rustam as Asfandiyár ;
 But as I looked more deeply I perceived
 The Dív controlling wisdom's path. Thou knowest
 What Faith and honour bid, the laws of God,
 And thine own sire's intent. Restrain thyself,
 Do life no hurt, and hear thy brother's words."

I heard what Rustam said : his greatness matched
His courage, and thy fetters will not gall him.
He heedeth not thy Grace divine and state.
The chief of cavaliers, the son of Zál,
Will not put his head lightly in the net.
The matter, as I fear, will be prolonged
For evil, being 'twixt two haughty men.
Thou art a great man, wiser than the Sháh,
And abler both in skill and bravery.
If one would feast, the other strive for vengeance,
Consider which the more deserveth praise."

The prince replied : " If I shall not obey
The Sháh I shall be censured in this world,
And God will call me to account hereafter.
I would not sell both worlds for Rustam's sake ;
No man will sew up his own eyes and heart."

The other said : " 'The outcome of good counsel,
Will profit thy pure body and thy soul.
I have said all. Now choose thee which is best ;
A prince's heart should be above revenge."

The chieftain bade the cooks to spread the board,
But said to no one : " Summon Rustam hither."
The eating done he took the cup in hand,
Spake of the Brazen Hold, of his own manhood,
And drank in honour of the king of kings,
While Rustam stayed within his palace-walls,
Remembering his promise to eat bread.
Now when a long while passed and no one came,
Though Rustam often looked along the road,
And when the time for feasting had gone by,
The hero's dignity could brook no more.
He smiled and said . " My brother ! deck the board,
And summon to the feast the men of birth.
If 'tis the custom of Asfandiyár
To treat us with such superciliousness
As to invite and then not summon us,

Hope for no good from him."

He spake. They decked
The board and, having eaten, rose. Then said
The heroic paladin to Farámarz —
"Bid saddle Rakhsh as they would do in Chín.
I shall go back and tell Asfandiyár.—
'Prince though thou art, remember: he that breaketh
His plighted word hath in himself effaced
The pathway that the great and good have traced.'"

§ 13

*How Asfandiyár excused himself for not summoning
Rustam to the Feast*

Then like an elephant he mounted Rakhsh,
Whose neighings could be heard two miles away,
And hurried to the river, where the troops
Pressed eagerly to see him, while the hearts
Of those that saw him loved him. All exclaimed:—
"This noble chief resembleth none but Sám,
The cavalier. An iron hill is he
Upon the saddle and thou wouldest say
That Rakhsh is Áhriman's own mount, and were
A mighty elephant his opposite
Then splash its head with mourning hues. The king
Must have a witless pate to give up one
That is possessed of Grace divine and prowess—
A moonlike chieftain like Asfandiyár—
To slaughter for the sake of crown and throne.
He groweth greedier with age and fonder
Of signet and of diadem."

When Rustam
Drew near, Asfandiyár went forth to meet him.
Said Rustam: "Paladin and glorious youth,
But of new-fangled manners! so thy guest
Was thought unworthy of the summoning!

Thy promise is a promise and no more.
Attend to what I say, and be not hasty
Without a cause with one advanced in years.
Thou thinkest far too highly of thyself,
And art too haughty to the chiefs. Good sooth!
Thou holdest me but light in point of courage,
And slight in counsel and in understanding.
Know that I am the Rustam of the world,
The lustre of the race of Narímán.
I make the Black Dív gnaw his hand, I lay
The heads of sorcerers low. The mighty men
That saw mine iron corslet, and that great
And roaring Lion that I rode, abandoned
The field without a blow and on the plain
Threw down their bows and arrows—valiant horsemen
And fighters like Kámús, the warrior,
Or like the Khán of Chín, whom with coiled lasso
I haled from saddle and bound head and foot.
The warden of the Sháhs am I, the stay
Of brave men everywhere. Mistake me not
Because I begged a boon, nor deem that thou
Art higher than heaven. Thy royal Grace and state
Led me to seek thy rede and fellowship,
And I desire not that a prince like thee
Should have his fortunes ruined by my hand,
Because heroic Sám is mine ideal,
At whose approach the lion fled the wood,
And I am his memorial on earth,
O valiant, royal prince Asfandiyár!
Long have I been the chief of paladins,
But never spent a day in evil-doing,
Have purged the world of foes and undergone
Abundant toil and stress. I thank my God
That in these latter days I have behold
My peer—a glorious Shoot who will take vengeance
On infidels amid the world's applause"

V. 1665 Then smiling on him said Asfandiyár:—
 “O son of Sám, the horseman! thou wast hurt
 In that no summons came whereas I took
 Some credit to myself. Be not displeased
 Because I spared thee on so hot a day
 So long a journey, for I said: ‘At dawn
 I will set out to offer mine excuses,
 Then shall I have the joy of seeing Zál,
 And be for once quite happy!’ But since thou
 Hast of thine own self undergone the toil,
 Hast left thy home and come across the plain,
 Sit down to rest thyself, take up the cup,
 And make no show of wrath and bitterness.”

Asfandiyár placed Rustam on his left,
 Such was the way in which he did the honours!
 Then said the veteran: “This is not my place;
 Let me have that to which I am entitled.”

The prince said to Bahman upon his right:—
 “Give him the seat as he demandeth it.”

Then Rustam in his wrath said to the prince.—
 “Look on me fairly and with open eyes,
 Regard my prowess and illustrious stock,
 For I am of the seed of valiant Sám.
 Though thou hast no seat that becometh me
 I have the Grace, my triumphs, and my prudence.”

V. 1666 Thereat the prince gave orders to his son
 To place a golden seat upon the dais,
 And with a scented orange Rustam came,
 And took his seat but he was all aflame.

§ 14

How Asfandiyár spake Shame of the Race of Rustam

Then thus to Rustam spake Asfandiyár:—
 “O lion-hearted chieftain of renown!

Now I have heard a tale from archimages,
The mighty men and sages wise of heart,
That Zál is one of evil race, a dív
By birth, and hath no better origin.
They kept him for a while concealed from Sám,
And thought the child a Doomsday to the world.
His head and hair were white, the rest was dark.
Sám at the sight of him was in despair,
And bade them take the young child to the sea
That birds and fish might have him for their prey.
Then the Símurgh came with spread wings but saw
That 'twas no proper child with Grace divine.
She bore him off to where she had a nest,
She carried him away to serve as food,
And threw him in contempt before her young
That they might finish him at feeding-time.
When they attempted to devour the child
They were afraid and would not batten on him,
But passed him over as he was so vile,
And turned away; though ravenous the Símurgh
Could not quite stomach such a thing as Zál,
But made him free of the nest though nobody
Was pleased to see him. He ate carrion
That she rejected, and his wretched body
Was raimentless. She came to love the child,
And thus the heaven turned o'er him for a season.
When he had fared on carrion for a while
She carried him all naked to Sístán,
Where Sám, who had no child, adopted him
Through folly, dotage, and stupidity.
The Sháhs and glorious, great men of my race,
My benefactors and mine ancestors,
Then took him up and furnished him withal.
Thus many years passed o'er him; he became
A Cypress, one whose head was out of reach;
It put forth branches and its fruit was Rustam,

Who by his manhood, skill, and mien thus scaled
The sky, in such wise seized on royalty,
Increased in power, and took to villainy."

§ 15

*How Rustam answered Asfandiyár, praising his own
Race and his Deeds*

Then Rustam answered, saying: "Hold thy peace!
Why speak'st thou such provocatory words?
Thy heart is growing into frowardness,
The utterance of thy soul is that of divs.
Speak what beftteth the great kings; the Sháh
In speaking swerveth not from what is right.
The world-lord knoweth that the son of Sám
Is great and hath both knowledge and fair fame.
Again, Sám was the son of Narímán,
Which hero was the son of Karímán,
And thus they run back to Garshásp, while all
Are scions of Jamshíd Thine ancestors
Obtained the crown through us, else none had named
them.

V. 1658 'Twas I who brought Kubád, the chosen one
Of all the people, out of Mount Alburz,¹
And but for that he had remained a subject,²
Not having treasure, host, or puissance.
In sooth thou must have heard reports of Sám,
Who had the fairest fame of all his time:
First, how there was a dragon once at Tús,
A dragon from whose clutches none could 'scape;
A crocodile in water and a leopard
On land, its breath would soften mountain-flints,
Would broil the fishes' heads in water-ways,
Would scorch the vultures' feathers in mid-air,

¹ See Vol. i. p. 382 *seq.*

² Reading with C.

And suck in elephants with its breath. Glad hearts
 Were saddened at the thought thereof. And next,
 There was a fearful and malicious dīv,
 Whose body was on earth and head in heaven,
 Because the sea of Chín reached but his middle,
 The sun itself shone with diminished lustre.
 He used to take up monsters from the deep
 And, towering o'er the orbit of the moon,
 Broil them upon the sun while turning heaven
 Was all dissolved in tears. These two great Pests¹
 Were rendered lifeless and consumed before
 The sword of Sám, the hero. Then again,
 My mother was the daughter of Míhráb,
 Who made the realm of Sind so prosperous,
 And was the fifth descendant from Zahhák,
 Who raised his head above all other kings.
 Who hath a nobler origin than this?
 A wise man will not turn from truth: the honour
 Of all the world is mine, and other heroes
 Must seek to win it back from me. Again,
 Mine earliest patent is from Kai Kátís,
 Thou canst not find a pretext on that score.
 I have one too from righteous Kai Khusrau,
 Like whom no Kaian ever girt his loins.
 My wanderings have covered all the earth,
 And many an unjust monarch have I slain.
 Whenas I crossed the waters of Jílún
 Afrásiyáb fled from Túrán to Chín.²
 When Kai Kátís went to Mázandarín³
 My father Zál had much to say thereon.
 Thou knowest how that Sháh fared with the dívs,
 And in his blindness cried out from his soul.
 Alone I journeyed to Mázandarín;
 The nights were gloomy and the leagues were long.
 I did not spare the White Dív or Arzhang,

V. 1669

¹ See Vol. i. pp. 172, 296. ² *Id.* ii. 356. ³ *Id.* 30 seq.

Púlád,¹ son of Ghundí, or Bíd or Sanja.
 Moreover for our monarch's sake I slew
 My wise and valiant boy.² There hath not been
 Another warrior like Suhráb in strength,
 In courage, and approof in war. In sooth
 Above six hundred years have passed away
 Since I was severed from the reins of Zál;
 I have been always paladin in chief,
 In public or in private 'twas all one
 Just as it was with noble Farídún,
 Who set the crown of greatness on his head,
 Dethroned Zahhák and brought him, head and crown,
 To dust, and secondly, as Sám, my grandsire,
 Engrossed the craft and knowledge of the world,
 So, thirdly, since I girded up my loins
 The person of the monarch hath had rest.
 There never were such days of happiness,
 The wanderers' feet were never so secure,
 As when my will prevailed throughout the world,
 And I used scimitar and massive mace.
 I speak in order that thou mayst know all,
 For thou art prince and nobles are thy flock;
 Yet in respect of age thou art a youth,
 Though with the Grace of Kai Khusrau. Thou seest
 None but thyself and know'st not secret matters.
 Now, having talked much, turn we for relief
 To wine and hunt therewith the soul of grief."

V. 1670

§ 16

How Asfandiyár boasted of his Ancestry

Asfandiyár, on hearing Rustam's words,
 Smiled and his heart began to beat with joy.
 He answered: "I have listened to thy toils,
 Thy pains, thy combats, and anxieties.

¹ Úlád in the text, but cf. Vol. iv. p. 296, note.² *Id.* ii. 172.

Now hearken to the gests that I have done,
Whereby I raised my head above the noble.
'Twas for the Faith that first I girt my loins,
And cleared the earth of idol-worshippers :
Our warriors could not see the world for slain.
Gushtásp was mine immediate ancestor,
Who was himself begotten by Luhrásp ;
Luhrásp again was son of king Aurand,
Who at that time possessed both fame and rank.
Aurand was of the seed of Kai Pashín,
Blessed by his father who was Kai Kubád—
A Sháh of wisdom and of upright heart ;
Pursue my race thus to Sháh Farídún,
The root of kings and glory of the throne.
My mother is, moreover, Cæsar's daughter,
Who is the crown upon the Rúmans' head
And sprung from Salm—a glorious lineage,
Instinct with justice, precedent, and Grace.
Salm was the son of valiant Farídún,
Who carried off the ball from all the kings
For valour. I assert what none gainsay,
Though many quit the way and few are in it,
That in the presence of mine own forebears,
Those mighty men devout and glorious,
Thou and thy grandsire were but servitors.
I do not seek to best thee but thou hadst
Thy kingship from the Sháhs, who were my sires,
For zealous service. Wait while I tell all,
Then if there be a falsehood point it out.
Since Sháh Luhrásp gave to Gushtásp the throne
I have been girt with valour and success,
And I have slain the pervers from the Faith
Upon the plains of Chín and of Túrán.
Then later on, when through Gurazm's words
My father bound and banned me from the feast,
Ill reached Luhrásp by reason of my bonds :

The Turkmans hid the earth Then to the hold
 Of Gumbadán the veteran Jámásp
 Came with a message and in soldier's garb.
 When he arrived and saw how I was bound,
 Saw how my mind and heart were pierced by care,
 He sent for blacksmiths to deliver me
 Out of my heavy bondage, but their work
 Was far too slow for me because my heart
 Yearned for the scimitar. My heart was stratened
 I shouted at them, wrenched me from their grasp,
 Rose to my height from where I sat and brake
 My bonds with mine own hands, then sought the field
 Whereon the fortunes of Gushtásp were lost,
 And when Arjásp fled with his famed array
 Before me I girt up my loins with manhood,
 And went like raging lion in pursuit.
 As for the Seven Stages thou hast heard
 Of mine adventures with the lions there
 And with that Áhriman, and how I entered
 The Brazen Hold by guile and quelled a world,
 Hast heard about my doings in Túrán,
 And all the toil and hardship that I bare.
 Good sooth, no onager e'er hath endured
 Such from a pard, nor maw of crocodile
 From sailors' angle. On a mountain-top,
 Sequestered by its height from all the throng,
 There was a hold. I found the people all
 Idolaters and dazed like men bemused.
 Since Túr, the son of valiant Farídún,
 No man had robbed the hold of its repute.
 I took that fortress by my bravery,
 I cast the images upon the ground,
 And set alight the Fire there that Zarduhsht
 Brought in a censer out of Paradise.¹
 Victorious through the just, the only God,

¹ Cf. p. 33.

I came again in such case to Írán
 That we had no foe left in all the world,
 And not a Brahman in his idol-house.
 In all my battles I have fought unaided ;
 No one hath shared with me the cares of war.
 Now, seeing that we have so long conversed,
 Tilt up the wine-cup if thou art athirst."

§ 17

How Rustam vaunted his Valour

Then Rustam spake thus to Asfandiyár :—
 " My deeds remain as my memorial ;
 So now in simple justice hear the words
 Of one whose name is known—an ancient man :
 If I had gone not to Mázandarán,¹
 And borne my massive mace upon my shoulder,
 Where would have been blind Gív, Gúdarz, and Tús,
 And our exalted Sháh—that sport of grief ?
 Who had torn out the White Dív's heart and brain ? V. 1673
 Who had sufficient trust in his own arm ?
 Who would have rescued Kai Káús from bonds,
 And have restored him to the lofty throne
 Whereto from heavy chains I carried 'him—
 The fortune-favoured darling of Írán ?
 I cut the heads from off the sorcerers ;
 They saw no bier, no shroud, no burial.
 Mine only helpers in those fights were Rakhsh,
 And my sharp sword which meteth out the world.
 Then when Káús went to Hámávarán,²
 Where they made fast his feet in heavy fetters,
 I took an army of Íránians,
 Drawn from wherever there were prince and chief,
 Slow in the fight that folk's king, and made void

¹ Vol. ii. p 44 *seq.*² *Id.* 88 *seq.*

Their famous throne. The monarch of the world—
 Káús himself—was captive and his heart
 Was stricken by anxiety and travail.
 Meanwhile Afrásiyáb was in Írán
 Together with his host and famous chiefs.
 Then it was I who rescued Kai Káús
 As well as Tús, Gíy, and Gúdarz, and brought them
 Back to Írán out of Hámávarán,
 Brought all the paladins and men of name.
 One dark night as I went before the troops
 In search of fame, not rest, Afrásiyáb
 Discerned my fluttering flag and heard Rakhsh neigh :
 Abandoning Írán he made for Chín,
 And justice and thanksgiving filled the world.
 Had blood come from the neck of Kai Káús
 How could he have begotten Siyáwush ?
 Had saintly mother not borne Kai Khusrau,
 Who would have named Luhrásp for Sháh ? Why vaunt
 About his crown, the armlets and the throne
 Of Sháh Gushtásp¹ who saith : ‘ Go, bind the hands
 Of Rustam ’ ? Not high heaven itself shall bind them !
 From boyhood up to now in mine old age
 I have not borne such words from any man.
 To make excuses and beg off would shame me ;
 To speak thus mildly is a degradation.”

Asfandiyár smiled at his violence
 And, reaching out and gripping Rustam’s hand,
 Said : “ Rustam of the elephantine form !
 Thou art what all have represented thee ;
 Thine arm is mighty as a lion’s thigh,
 Thy breast and limbs are like a lusty dragon’s,
 Thy waist is fine and slender as the pard’s,
 And such a chieftain beareth off the day ”

He squeezed the hand of Rustam as he spake,
 But yet the youth made not the old man writhe ;

¹ Reading with P.

V. 1674

V. 1675

Though gall exuded from his finger-nails
 Good sooth the hero writhed not with the pain.
 Then Rustam grasped the prince's hand in his,
 And said. "O prince and worshipper of God!
 How blessèd is the famous Sháh Gushtásp
 To have a son such as Asfandiyár!
 How blest is he who getteth one like thee:
 He addeth to the glory of the world!"

He spake and grasped the other's hand until
 The prince's face became as red as blood,
 Till blood and water oozed out from his nails,
 And he was frowning, though he laughed and said:—
 "Famed Rustam! drink today. In fight tomorrow
 Thou wilt have pain and think no more of feasting.
 Or ever I shall saddle my black steed,
 And place the royal helm upon my head,
 I will unhorse thee with my spear: thereafter
 Thou wilt not seek for battle and revenge.
 Then will I bind thy hands, bear thee before
 The Sháh, and say: 'I saw no fault in him,'
 Will intercede for thee and urge all pleas,
 Will set thee free from sorrow, pain, and travail,
 And thou shalt have instead both good and treasure."

V. 1676

Then Rustam, smiling at Asfandiyár,
 Said: "Thou shalt have enough of combating.
 Where hast thou seen the fights of warriors?
 Where hast thou felt the wind of massive maces?
 If such then be the aspect of the sky
 Love will be veiled between two men at least;
 We shall have war instead of ruddy wine,
 Use lasso, bow, and strategy, require
 The roar of drum instead of voice of harp,
 And greet each other with the sword and mace.
 Then shalt thou, glorious Asfandiyár!
 Behold the rush and pulsing of the fight.
 Tomorrow when I come upon the field,

And in the battle man opposeth man,
 I will unhorse thee with a firm embrace,
 And carry thee away to glorious Zál,
 Then seat thee on the famous ivory throne,
 And crown thee with the heart-rejoicing crown,
 Which I myself received from Kai Kubád,
 And may his soul rejoice in Paradise !
 I will unlock my treasury fulfilled
 With precious things and lay my hoards before thee,
 Put all thy troops past want and raise to heaven
 Thy crown, then seek the presence of the Sháh
 In state rejoicing, boldly set the crown
 Upon thy head as thanks to Sháh Gushtásp,
 Then gird me as I have been girt erewhile
 Before the Kaians, renovate my heart
 With joy, and make the Garden's surface woodless.
 Men's bodies will not keep their souls within
 When thou art Sháh and I am paladin."

§ 18

How Rustam drank Wine with Asfandiyár

V 1677 Asfandiyár replied : " More talk is useless.
 My belly craveth, half the day is over,
 And we have had much talk of combating.
 Bring ye the table and what food ye have,
 But summon nobody that talketh much ! "

Now when the board was spread, and Rustam ate,
 They were astonished at his appetite.
 Asfandiyár and all the other heroes
 Set lambs in front of him on every side.
 He ate them all, whereat the prince and people
 Were lost in wonder. Then the prince commanded.—
 " Bring cups and ruddy wine for him, and we
 Will note how he will hold forth in his cups,
 And prate of Kai Káuś. "

The drawer brought

A goblet filled with wine of ancient vintage,
 And Rustam drank it to the king of kings,
 He drained that golden fountain dusty-dry.
 The young cup-bearer brought the cup again—
 The same with royal wine replenished—
 And matchless Rustam whispered to the boy :—
 “ We want no water on the table here.
 Why dost thou mingle water in the cup,
 And weaken this old wine ? ”

Said Bishútan

Thus to the server : “ Bring a bowlful neat ”

He had the wine brought, summoned minstrelsy,
 And gazed astound on Rustam.

At departure,

V 1678

When noble Rustam was all flushed with wine,
 Asfandiyár said thus to him : “ Live happy
 While time shall last. May both the wine and meat
 Agree with thee, and right be thy soul’s provand.”

To him said Rustam : “ Prince ! may wisdom ever
 Be thine admonisher. What wine soe’er
 I drink with thee is good and nourisheth
 My prudent soul. If thou wilt ban this strife,
 Wilt magnify thy majesty and wisdom,
 Wilt leave the plain and come to mine abode,
 Wilt for a season be my joyous guest,
 I will accomplish all that I have said,
 And set before thee wisdom as a guide.
 Pause for a while and strive not after ill ;
 Show courage and regain thy common sense.”

Asfandiyár, the hero, thus rejoined :—

“ Sow not a seed that ne’er will grow. Tomorrow
 Thou shalt behold the accomplishment of heroes
 What time I gird my girdle for the fray.
 Moreover do not glorify thyself ;
 Go home and fit thee for tomorrow’s work.
 Thou shalt perceive that in the ranks of war

I am the same as in my revelry.
 Attack me not upon the battlefield,
 Hear mine advice; go not about to fight
 Thou shalt see prowess greater than my words;
 Let it not prove a cause of grief to me.
 Accept of all the counsel that I give:
 Submit to fetters at the Sháh's command
 What time we quit Zábul and seek Írán,
 And come before the monarch of the brave."

Then grief made Rustam ponder, and the world
 Was like a wood before his eyes. He thought:—

V. 1679

"For me to give my hands up to his bonds,
 Or rise up in my might and injure him,
 Are courses both inglorious and bad,
 Both novel and ill precedents. Moreover,
 My name will suffer from his bonds while I
 By slaying him shall end but ill myself,
 And all that tell the tale throughout the world
 Will never let my blame grow obsolete,
 Thus saying: 'Rustam 'scaped not from a youth
 Who went forth to Zábul and bound his hands.'
 Then all my fame will turn to infamy,
 I shall be smirched and be in evil odour,
 While if he shall be slain upon the field
 My face will pale in presence of all kings,
 And men will say: 'He slew the youthful prince
 For speaking harshly' I shall be accursed,
 When I am dead, and called 'old infidel.'
 Again, if I shall perish by his hand
 Zábulistán will lose both hue and scent,
 Zál's seed will perish and no Zábulí
 Gain fame thenceforth. Still men at least shall quote
 Good words from me when I have passed away,
 And if I left but one good word untried,
 Past doubting, wisdom's self would take my life."

Then to that haught man thus he spake: "Concern

Hath made my visage wan. Why speak so much
 Of bonds ? I fear that thou wilt suffer hurt
 Therefrom unless the will of heaven be other :
 The swift sky's purpose is above surmise.
 Thine are dívs' counsels, thou wilt not receive
 Wise words. Thou art a man of simple heart
 And versed not in the world. Know that thy hurt
 Is aimed at secretly, for while Gushtásp
 Hath crown and throne he will not grow weary
 Of life and fortune, but will keep thee running
 About the world and make thee face all dangers.
 He hath examined all the earth, and made
 An ax of wisdom and a bill of wit,
 To find a chief that will not quail to fight thee,
 That thou mayst perish by that hand, and he
 Still may retain the crown and lofty throne.
 Shall imprecations be upon the crown,
 And by that token shalt thou couch in dust ?
 Wilt thou expose my soul to obloquy ?
 Why wilt thou not consider in thy heart ?
 Thou art the source of trouble to thyself
 Though injured not at heart by any foe.
 Act not, O prince ! act not so boyishly,
 Delight not so in ill, our hearts aggrieve not,
 Nor bring calamity on both our souls ;
 Have some respect for God and for my face,
 And act not as a traitor to thyself.
 There is no need at all for thee to fight,
 To struggle or contend or strive against me.
 'Tis Destiny that hath been driving thee
 With this thy host to perish by my hand,
 While I shall leave an ill name in the world.
 Oh ! may Gushtásp's own end be also ill ! "

When proud Asfandiyár had heard these words
 He thus returned reply - " O noble Rustam !
 Mark well the saying of a sage of yore,

What time he married wisdom to his soul :—

‘ An aged deceiver is a fool indeed

Howe’er successful and possessed of rede.’

Thou practisest upon me so to keep

The collar from thy neck, and wouldst that all

V 1681 Who hear this should believe thy specious words,

Call me a man whose purpose is malign,

Call thee a wise man and beneficent,

And say thus ‘ Rustam came in all good will,

With invitations, and held out great hopes,

But still the chief rejected what he said,

And would consent to nothing but a fight ,

He treated Rustam’s wishes with contempt,

And kept his own tongue charged with bitterness.

Know that I will not disobey the Sháh,

Though ’twere to win the crown and diadem.

My good and evil in this world depend

On him , he is my Hell and Paradise.

May that which thou hast eaten nourish thee,

And may it work destruction to thy foes.

Go home in safety, tell what thou hast heard,

Prepare for fight, and bandy not more talk.

Come forth at dawn, use every ruse of battle,

And make an end Tomorrow thou shalt see

The world turn black before thee on the field,

Know how the heroes fight, and what a day

Of battle and contention really is.”

Then Rustam said : “ O seeker after fame !

Since such a wish as this hath come to thee,

Upon swift Rakhsh will I perform the part

Of host and physic thee with club and mace.

Thou hast heard people saying in thy land,

And grown self-confident because of it :—

‘ The swords of warriors on the battlefield

Will ne’er avail against Asfandiyár.’

Tomorrow thou shalt see my pointed spear,

As well as somewhat of my horsemanship,
And afterward thou wilt not seek to fight
Upon the battlefield with men renowned."

The valiant youth with laughter on his lips—
A laughter that humiliated Rustam—
Replied: "O thou that seekest after fame!
Thou hast been angered quickly by our talk.
Tomorrow, when thou comest on the field,
Thou wilt be more informed about the doings
Of men that are men. I am not a mountain,
Nor is my steed. I shall not be attended,
And, saving for the name of God, shall have
No help from blow of shaft and scimitar.
Thy mother, should thy head go down the blast
Through mace of mine, will weep for pain of heart,
And, if thou art not slain upon the field
Of battle, I will bind and carry thee
Bound to the Sháh that such a slave as thou
May seek not fight with him as thou dost now."

V. 1682

§ 19

How Rustam returned to his Palace

As Rustam went forth from the tent-enclosure
He stood before the entry for awhile,
And thus addressed the tent: "O house of hope!
Blest were the days that saw Jamshíd within thee.
Great wert thou in the time of Kai Káuś,
And in the days of favoured Kai Khusrau,
But now the door of Grace is shut upon thee,
For one unworthy sitteth on thy throne."

Asfandiyár, the hero, heard the words,
Strode forth to noble Rustam, and spake thus:—
"Why art thou angry with the tent-enclosure,
Thou well-advised? Well might a man of sense
Bestow upon Zábulistán the name

Of 'Babblestead' Why need a guest abuse
 His host because the guest is weary of him?
 V. 1683 Time was," he went on to the tent-enclosure,
 'When thou hast held Jamshíd in thine embrace,
 Who left the way of God and forfeited
 Good days on earth and jocund Paradise.¹
 The day too was when thou for Sháh Káuś
 Didst serve as veil and shelter for the troops,
 Káuś who sought to know God's mysteries,
 And hankered to investigate the stars.²
 The earth was all convulsed on his account,
 And filled with depredation, sword, and arrow.
 Gushtásp is now thine owner, and Jámásp
 Is standing in his presence. At his side
 Is seated on one hand Zarduhsht who brought
 The Zandavasta out of Paradise,
 Upon the other Bishútan, the brave
 And good, not seeking this world's weal and woe,
 In front is glorious Asfandiyár,
 The man in whom the wheel of fortune joyeth,
 In whom the hearts of good men live; the bad
 Turn slaves through terror of his scimitar."

The valiant cavalier passed through the gate.
 Asfandiyár looked after him and, when
 He had departed, said to Bishútan:—
 "I must admit his manliness and prowess.
 I have not looked on such a horse and horseman,
 And know not how this combat will result.
 A mighty elephant upon Mount Gang
 Is he if he doth come forth armed to battle.
 His Grace and comeliness surpass his height,
 Yet will he see, I fear, a fall tomorrow.
 The Glory of his countenance inflameth
 My heart, but still I will not sever it
 V. 1684 From our just Sháh's behest. When Rustam cometh

¹ See Vol. i pp. 134, 139.² See Vol. ii. p. 102 seq.

Upon the field tomorrow I will dim
His day."

Said Bishútan: "List to my words:
I say to thee, my brother¹ do not so.
I said to thee before, I say again,
And will not purge my heart of what is right,
Aggrieve not any, for a noble man
Will not submit to injury and wrong.
Take rest tonight and at tomorrow's dawn
Go unattended to his palace, there
Let us enjoy some days of happiness,
And answer every question that he raiseth
Among the mighty and among the mean
No good is done that is not done by him.
He will not turn away from thy commands,
For I perceive that he is true to thee.
Why struggle so in vengeance and in wrath?
Wash vengeance from thy heart, ire from thine eyes."

Asfandiyár returned this answer. "Thorns
Are growing in the corner of the Rose-bed."¹
He said moreover: "Surely these thy words
Become not a professor of the Faith!
If thou art minister of all Írán,
The heart, the ears, and eyes of valiant men,
Canst thou approve a course however wise
That bringeth injury upon the Sháh?
Then all my cares and toils have turned to wind,
And all the doctrine of Zarduhsht is wrong,
Which teacheth us that those who disobey
The Sháh's commands shall have their place in Hell.
Thou bid'st me oft: 'Be disobedient,
Reject thou the commandment of Gushtásp.'
Thou sayest it, but how can I convert
Yea into nay through any words of thine?
If thou hast fears about my person I

¹ Of the court, i.e. my own people are turning against me.

V. 1685 Now will relieve thee of them. No one dieth
 Save at his fated time, and wholly then
 One that hath made no name Tomorrow thou
 Shalt see my dealings on the battlefield
 With this brave Crocodile."

Said Bishútan :—

"Thou talk'st so much of fight, O chief! because
 The foul Iblís¹ hath ceased to wish thee ill
 Since thou cam'st hither with the sword and mace.
 Thou hast given the Dív an entry to thy heart,
 And hearkenest not to me, thy counsellor.
 I see thy heart obscured, thy head fulfilled
 With strife, and rend my clothes. Oh! how can I
 Relieve my heart of terror once for all?
 Of two such men, such warriors and brave Lions,
 How can I know which body will go under?"

Still vapouring though full of misery
 The noble prince returned him no reply.

§ 20

How Zál counselled Rustam

Now Rustam coming to his palace saw
 No remedy but fight. Zawára came
 And found him wan and gloomy. Rustam said :—
 "Go² bring mine Indian sword, cuirass, and helm
 Of battle, bring my bow and massive bards,
 My lasso, mighty mace, and tiger-skin."

Zawára bade the treasurer produce
 What Rustam named, who, seeing his fighting-gear,
 Cried with a sigh and with dejected head :—
 "O war-cuirass! thou hast had rest awhile
 From fight, but now a fight confronteth thee.
 Prove strong and lucky wear for me at all times.

¹ Cf. Vol. i. p. 70.

² Reading with C and P.

Oh ! what a battlefield is this, for roaring
Two Lions, valiant both, will meet in battle !
And how now will Asfandiyár proceed,
And show what sport amid the blast of war ? ”

When Zál heard Rustam's words the old man's brain v. 1686
Grew anxious, and he said : “ Famed paladin !
What words are these that make me dark of soul ?
Since first thou mounted'st on the battle-saddle
Thou hast been single-hearted and sincere ,
It hath not irked thee to obey the Sháhs.
I fear me that thy day is near its close,
And that thy star is falling into sleep,
That this will overthrow the race of Zál,
And cast our wives and children to the dust.
If thou art slain in battle by the hand
Of such a youth as is Asfandiyár,
Zábulistán will have no land or water
Left, and our eminence will be engulfed ,
While if mishap through this befalleth him
Not e'en thy fame exalted will be left thee,
For they that tell hereof will shatter it,
And say : ‘ 'Twas he that slew the youthful prince
For having spoken to him scurvily.’
Now either stand before him as his liege,
Or, if thou wilt not do so, quit thy home.
Seek some obscure retreat unknown to him
That no one in the world may hear thy name,
For such an evil act would gloom thy soul.
Beware then of this monarch of the world,
Buy back again thy words with toil and treasure,
Prefer brocade of Chín to battle-ax,
Prepare gifts also for his troops, and use
Thy riches to redeem thyself from him.
As soon as he departeth from the Hírmund
Mount lofty Rakhsh and, feeling no misgivings,
Attend Asfandiyár upon his journey

That thou mayst see the Sháh's face once again.
 How shall he act ill when he seeth thee ?
 Will wrong become the monarch of Írán ?”

V. 1687

“O ancient hero !” Rustam answered him,
 “Take not such things so lightly. Now have I
 Been long a man and known much good and ill.
 I reached the dívs within Mázandarán,¹
 I fought the horsemen of Hámávarán,²
 I fought Kámús too³ and the Khán of Chín,⁴
 Although earth trembled underneath his steed.
 Now if I flee Asfandiyár do thou
 Resign the flowers and palace of Sístán.
 With God, the Fosterer, to aid shall I
 Quail at Gushtásp and at Asfandiyár ?
 Old as I am yet on the day of battle
 I will bring down the orbéd moon's head to dust.
 What are a hundred mighty elephants,
 Or fields of men, when on the battle-day
 I don my tiger-skin ? Thou speak'st of prayers.
 I have not spared them and have read to him
 Subjection's roll. He doth misprize my words,
 And turneth from both wisdom and my counsel,
 But now if he will stoop his head from Saturn,
 And give me salutations heartily,
 I will not grudge him gems or other treasures,
 Or mace and sparth and coat of mail and sword ;
 But all that I can say hath no effect,
 And in our talk we merely clutch the wind.
 Tomorrow, if he is resolved to fight,
 Have not thy heart in pain about his life,
 Because I will not grasp my trenchant sword,
 But with my lasso take his noble head,
 I will not wheel about upon the field ;
 He shall not feel my sparth or spear-thrust ; I

¹ Vol. 11. p. 57 *seq*³ *Id.* 11. 188.² *Id.* 95 *seq.*⁴ *Id.* 230.

Will cut off his retreat, clutch him amain
About the waist, and hug him from the saddle,
Bestow on him the kingship of Gushtásp,
Will bring and set him on our splendid throne,
And afterward fling wide the treasury's door.
When he hath been my guest three days and when,
Upon the fourth, the Lustre of the world
Hath doffed the robe of lapis lazuli,
And when the Cup of Topaz showeth, forthwith
In company with him will I regird
My self, set face toward Gushtásp, will set
The prince upon the famous ivory throne,
Will crown him with the heart-delighting crown,
Gird mine own loins before him as a slave,
And only seek to carry out his will.
Thou knowest, thou rememberest my brave deeds
Performed before the throne of Kai Kubád,
Yet now thou biddest me to skulk away,
Or yield me unto bonds if I am bidden !”

V. 1688

Zál smiled to hear the words that Rustam spake,
And shook his head awhile in meditation,
Then answered Rustam, saying : “ O my son !
These words of thine have neither head nor tail,
And only lunatics on hearing thee
Could give assent to thy distempered speech.
Thou art Kubád when seated on a mountain
In dudgeon, lacking throne, crown, wealth, and treasure.
Oppose not then the Sháh, a chief and one
With rede and ancient treasures, or one like
Asfandiyár, whose name Faghfúr of Chín
Inscribeth on his signet. ‘ I will take,’
Thou sayest, ‘ from the saddle to my breast
Asfandiyár and bring him to Zál’s palace ’ !
No man advanced in years should speak like that ;
Haunt not the portal of thine evil star.
Now have I told thee what my counsel is,

As thou dost know, O leader of the people !”

V. 1689 He spake, stooped to the earth, praised the Almighty,
And said : “Thou Judge supreme ! avert from us
The ills of fortune !”

Thus he made request
Until the sun rose o’er the mountain-crest.

§ 21

How Rustam fought with Asfandhyár

When day came Rustam donned his coat of mail
With his protecting tiger-skin withal,
He tied his lasso to the saddle-straps,
He mounted on his elephantine steed,
And, having bidden Zawára come, held talk
At large about the troops, and said : “Depart,
Be marshal of the host, and take thy station
On yonder sand-hills.”

So Zawára went,
And mustered all the troops on the parade
To lead them to the field. When matchless Rustam
Came from his palace, spear in hand, they all
Blessed him, and said : “May charger, sparth, and saddle
Ne’er lack thee.”

Rustam followed by Zawára,
His second in the state, went to the Hírmund :
The soldiers vaunted but his soul was sad.
His brother and the troops both halted there,
But he advanced toward the Íránian host,
First saying to Zawára privily :—
“E’en at this present I would stay from battle
The hands of that beguiling reprobate,
And make a pathway for his soul to light,
But still I fear that we shall come to blows,
And after that I know not what will be.
Remain thou here and keep the troops in hand ;

I go to see what fortune will bring forth.
 If I shall find him wroth then by that token
 I shall not call chiefs from Zábulistán,
 But shall engage with him in single combat,
 I would not have one of the army injured
 Victorious fortune always favoureth
 The man whose heart is on the side of justice."

V 1690

He passed the river, mounted on a height,
 And marvelled at the process of the world,
 He called and said: "O brave Asfandiyár!
 Thine opposite hath come, prepare thyself."

Asfandiyár, when he had heard the words
 Which that old, battle-seeking Lion spake,
 Laughed and replied: "Behold I made me ready
 Or ever I arose from sleep."

He bade

To bring helm, breastplate, spear, and ox-head mace.
 These brought, he clothed his shining breast and donned
 His Kaian casque, then bade his sable steed
 Be saddled and led forth, which when he saw
 He in the might and puissance that he had
 Stood on the ground the butt-end of his spear,
 And vaulted to the saddle as a leopard
 Will leap upon the back of onager
 And madden it. The soldiers marvelled at him,
 And called down blessings on their noble chief,
 Who went and, drawing nigh to peerless Rustam,
 Saw him upon his charger unattended,
 And spake thus from his steed to Bishútan —
 "I want no friend or mate in fighting him,
 For since he is alone I too will go
 Alone and mount upon yon lofty height."

They both went forth to battle in such wise
 That thou hadst said: "The world hath done with
 feastings."

As they drew near, the old man and the young, .

V 1691

Both noble Lions and both paladins,
 Their steeds neighed, thou hadst said: "The field is rent!"
 And Rustam shouted. "Happy, prosperous prince!
 Be not so wroth and fierce, but hear for once
 A wise man's words: if thou desirest fight
 And bloodshed, and such stir and strife, permit
 That I lead forth the horsemen of Zábul
 With hauberks from Kábul upon their breasts,
 And do thou likewise bid the Íránians,
 That men may know the jewel from the mite.
 Let us bring them to battle on the field,
 And for our own parts tarry for a while,
 Thus there will both bloodshed and fierce fighting
 According to thy wish."

Asfandiyár

Replied: "Why talk so much to no avail?
 Thou camest from thy palace at the dawn,
 And from this lofty hill didst challenge me.
 Why now hast thou befooled me? In good sooth
 Thou hast perceived that thine own fall is near.
 Why should I fight against Zábulistán?
 Why should Írán fight with Kábulistán?
 May no such disposition e'er be mine.
 It is not in accordance to my creed
 That I shall give Íránians to be slain,
 Or crown myself. I go forth first in battle
 Albeit to leopard's claws. If thou hast need
 Of helpers send for them; such help not me.
 God will help me in fight and fortune smile
 Upon mine undertaking. Thou dost challenge,
 And I am willing, let us fight it out
 Between ourselves unhelped, and we shall then
 See if the charger of Asfandiyár
 Will go toward the stable riderless,
 Or if the charger of the challenger
 Will turn toward Rustam's halls without its lord."

The combatants agreed that none should aid.
 Long while they fought together with their spears. V. 1692
 And from their breastplates poured down blood amain.
 Thus they continued till the spear-points brake,
 And they were forced to use their scimitars,
 They grew more instant, wheeled to left and right,
 And, when their stout swords shivered with the
 strokes,
 Reached out and, drawing sparth from saddle, showered
 Blows as stones shower a-down a precipice.
 Wroth as two lions raging they belaboured
 Each other. When the hafts brake, and their hands
 Were weaponless, they clutched their leathern girdles
 While both their speedy chargers strove to fly.
 Asfandiyár grasped Rustam's belt, and Rustam
 Asfandiyár's. Those two exalted heroes,
 Both men of elephant-body, tugged amain,
 Yet neither Lion budged. Both cavaliers
 Were all distraught, both steeds fordone, with fight.¹
 Within their mouths the blood and dust were blent
 In foam, on man and horse the mail was rent.

§ 22

*How the Sons of Asfandiyár were slain by Zawára
 and Farámurz*

When Rustam, son of Zál, had tarried long,
 Because the heroes fought no little while,
 Zawára led his troops across the river—
 An army seared of heart and keen for strife.
 He cried to the Íránians: "Where is Rustam?
 V. 1693
 Why should we hold our peace on such a day?
 It was to fight with Rustam that ye came,
 Came to the gullet of the Crocodile.

¹ Reading with P.

Ye would bind Rustam's hands ! No sitting still
For us on such a field !”

He cursed and spake

Unseemly words. A famous cavalier,
Son of Asfandiyár, was full of wrath
Thereat. He was a youth hight Núsh Ázar,
A leader of the host and masterful.
This noble raged against the Sigzian,¹
And loosed his lips to utter foul abuse.
“Fool of a Sigzian !” said he, “know'st thou not
That every one that cherisheth the Faith
Rejecteth all self-seeking manfully,
And liveth on the bidding of the Sháhs ?
Asfandiyár, the hero, ordered us
Not to engage in battle with you dogs.
Who then will disobey his hest and counsels,
And who be bold to break his fealty ?
But if ye will commit this wickedness,
And take upon you to provoke a fight,
Ye shall behold for once what warriors are,
When armed with swords and spears and massive
maces.”

Zawára gave his troops command : “Lay on,
And crown yon chieftains with a crown of blood.”

Forth to the front he went, the din of war
Rose, and they slew Íránians numberless,
While Núsh Ázar, on seeing this, made ready,
Bestrode his noble dun and, Indian sword
In hand, advanced. Upon the other side
A warrior came—the refuge of the host,
A chief. That famous one was named Alwá—
A dashing cavalier and masterful.
Him Núsh Ázar espied, drew sword, and smote
His foe's head, who came from steed to dust.
Zawára spurred his warhorse, neared, and cried

V. 1694

¹ See Vol. ii. p. 100, *note*.

To Núsh Ázar : " Him hast thou slain and now
Stand fast thyself ! I do not call Alwá
A horseman "

With his spear he smote the head
Of Núsh Ázar, who tumbled to the ground.
The day turned 'gainst his host when he was slain.
His youthful brother Mihr-i-Núsh, a swordsman,
In tears, with troubled ¹ heart, in dudgeon spurred
His elephantine steed and from the centre
Advanced before the lines with lips a-foam
Through anguish, while for his part Farámarz,
Like maddened elephant, came, Indian sword
In hand, and closed with noble Mihr-i-Núsh
While both hosts shouted. Both antagonists
Were noble youths—a prince and paladin ;
They were as fierce as lions combative,
And with their swords belaboured one another.
Though Mihr-i-Núsh was active on the field
He had not strength to fight with Farámarz.
The young prince raised his sword and hoped to lay
His famous foeman's head upon the dust,
But struck the blow upon his own steed's neck
So that it came down headlong to the ground,
And Farámarz dispatched him thus unhorsed ;
The battlefield was reddened with his blood.
Now when Bahman beheld his brothers slain,
And all the soil beneath them turned to mire
With gore, he came up to Asfandiyar,
When he was in the hottest of the fight,
And said to him : " O ardent sire ! a host
Of Sigzians hath come forth to strive with us !
Thy two sons—Núsh Ázar and Mihr-i-Núsh—
Have yielded wretchedly their lives to them.
Thou fightest here while we are in distress,
Our youths and princes shrouded by the dust.

V. 1695

¹ Reading with P.

Eternal shame will rest upon our race
Through what these fools have done."

The shrewd chief's heart

Was full of rage, his lips were full of sighs,
His eyes of tears. "O offspring of the Dív!"
He said to Rustam, "wherefore hast thou left
The common path of right? Didst thou not say.—
'I will not bring the army to the fight'?
Thou hast no sense of honour and of shame.
Hast thou no reverence for me or God?
Dost thou not dread His Day of Reckoning?
Dost thou not know that they who break their pledge
Will have no worship with their fellow-men?
Two Sigzians have slaughtered my two sons,
And still they turn not from their blind misdoings."

When Rustam heard it he was sorely troubled
And, trembling like the branches of a tree,
Swore by the Sháh's own life and head, by sun,
And by the scimitar and battlefield:—
"I never gave commandment for this fight,
Nor do I praise the doer of this thing.
Now will I bind my brother's hands, who showed
The way to ill, and bring too Farámarz
In manacles before the pious Sháh.
Slay them in vengeance for thy noble sons,
And be not wroth for this insensate act!"

Aṣfandiyár replied: "For me to shed
A snake's blood for a peacock's is not well
Or seemly, and it hath no precedent
With mighty Sháhs. Thou villain! guard thyself
Because thy time hath come, and I will mix
Thy thighs and Rakhsh's body with mine arrows,
As milk is mixed with water, that no slave
Henceforth may dare to shed his master's blood.
If thou survivest I will bind thy hands,
And carry thee forthwith before the Sháh,

But if thou diest by mine arrow-points
Take it in vengeance for my noble sons."

Then Rustam : "What availeth all this talk
Unless it be to make our glory less ?
And now to God, to every good the Guide,
Turn thee for shelter and in Him confide."

§ 23

How Rustam fled to the Heights

They took their bows and shafts of poplar wood ;
The sun's face lost its lustre ,¹ but, while Rustam
And Rakhsh both suffered injury whenever
A shaft was loosened from the prince's hand,
The shafts of Rustam injured not the prince,
And noble Rustam, in bewilderment
At such a contest, said · "The warrior,
Asfandiyár, hath got a form of brass !" ²

V. 1697

When Rakhsh was growing weak beneath those
arrows,
And neither horse nor warrior were whole,
The rider lighted wind-like from his steed,
And set his noble face toward the heights,
While wounded Rakhsh went on his homeward way,
And so became a stranger to his lord.
The blood was pouring down from Rustam's body,
That Mount Bistún was weak and all a-tremble.
Asfandiyár laughed out at seeing it,
And cried : "O famous Rustam ! why hath strength
Departed from the maddened Elephant ?
Why is the iron Mountain pierced by arrows ?
Oh ! whither have thy mace and manhood gone,
Thy Grace divine and eminence in war ?
Why hast thou fled away and scaled the heights

¹ Six couplets omitted.

² See p. 19.

Because thou heard'st a mighty Lion's voice ?
 Art thou not he that caused the dívs to wail,
 And singed wild beasts with flashes from his sword ?
 Why hath the elephant of war turned fox,
 And grown thus impotent in fight ? ”

Zawára

Perceived the step of glossy Rakhsh, who came
 From far all wounded, and the world grew dark
 Before his eyes. He went forth to the scene
 Of strife, lamenting, and beheld the form
 Of elephantine Rustam wounded thus,
 With all the wounds undressed, and said to him :—
 “ Up, mount my steed, and I will don for thee
 The breastplate of revenge.”

He answered : “ Go

To Zál and say : ‘ The glory of Sám's race
 Is gone. Look to the remedy therefor,
 And for these grievous wounds. If I survive
 Tonight the arrows of Asfandiyár
 It will, I wot, O Zál ! be even so
 As if my mother gave me birth today ! ’
 When thou hast gone let Rakhsh be all thy care,
 And I will follow though I tarry long.”

Zawára turned away intent on Rakhsh.

Asfandiyár abode awhile, then cried .—
 “ Famed Rustam ! wherefore standest all this time
 Upon the heights ? Who will direct thy steps ?
 Fling down thy bow, put off thy tiger-skin,
 And loose the girdle from thy loins. Repent,
 And yield thy hands to bondage , so shalt thou
 Receive from this time forth no hurt from me.
 I will conduct thee wounded to the Sháh,
 And not impute thine acts to thee as crimes ,
 But if thou wilt fight on then make thy will,
 Appointing somebody to be the marchlord,
 And ask God's pardon for thine own ill-doing ;

It may be that He will forgive thy faults,
And guide thee when thou quit'st this Wayside Inn."

But Rustam made reply: "It is too late,
Our hands are shortened both for good and ill;
Go back to thine own troops, for none is fain
To fight when it is night, and as for me
I will return to mine own palace now,
Refresh myself and slumber for a while,
Bind all my wounds and call some of my kin—
Zawára, Farámarz, Zál, and the others
Of name—and now I will perform thy hest,
For loyalty to thee is righteousness."

Asfandiyár, the brazen-bodied, said:—
"Old, self-willed reprobate! thou art a man,
A great and strong one, knowing many shifts,
And charms and counsels. I have marked thy false-
ness

V. 1699

All through, and long to see thine overthrow,
But still I give thee quarter for this night;
Thou shalt go home; but dally not with guile.
Do as I bid and never bandy words
With me again."

Then Rustam answered him:—
"I will make shift to charm my wounds away."

He left the presence of Asfandiyár,
Who watched to see how Rustam would proceed.
Sore wounded as he was he crossed the river;
Those arrow-wounds enforced him to dispatch.
When he had crossed the river, like a boat
He prayed to God for succour for his body,
And said: "O Thou, the just and holy Judge!
If I shall perish by these wounds of mine
What noble will avenge me, who take up
My rede, my courage, and my precedents?"

Asfandiyár was gazing after him,
And, having seen him reach the farther bank,

Exclaimed "They say that he is not a man !
 He is a mighty, raging Elephant !"
 Then added in amaze : " Almighty Judge !
 It was Thy will to make him of this sort,
 Who art the Author both of earth and time."

He went his way, and from his tent-enclosure
 Rose wailings. Bishútan came out lamenting
 For gallant Núsh Ázar and Mihr-i-Núsh.
 The prince's camp-enclosure was all dust,
 And every noble had his raiment rent.

V. 1700

Asfandiyár, alighting from his steed,
 Clasped to his breast the heads of those two slain,
 And said : " Alas ye two young warriors !
 Where have your souls gone from these forms of yours ? "

Then said he unto Bishútan : " Arise,
 And weep no more the slain. I see no good
 In pouring blood. We should not cling to life.
 We all are born to die, both old and young,
 And when we pass may wisdom succour us "
 · On teaken litters holding golden coffins
 He sent those corpses to the Sháh, his sire,
 The master of the crown, and with this message :—
 " This branch of thy design hath borne its fruit.
 Thou didst launch forth the boat upon the water
 By seeking for the servitude of Rustam.
 When thou behold'st the bier of Núsh Ázar
 And Mihr-i-Núsh be less intent on wrong.
 The bull Asfandiyár is in his hide :
 I know not what the future may bring forth."

He sat upon his throne in grief and mourning,
 And pondered Rustam's words. Then spake he thus
 To Bishútan : " The Lion cowereth
 Before the brave man's grip. Today when I
 Saw Rustam like an elephant in stature
 And mien I offered praise to holy God,
 The Author of our hopes and of our fears,

Who in His providence had formed him thus.
 Praise be to Him, the Maker of the world¹
 What actions once were Rustam's, he that used
 To drop his fish-hook in the sea of Chín
 And land the crocodile, and with his breath
 Suck in the leopard on the waste¹ Yet I
 Have wounded him with arrows till the ground
 Hath come to be a puddle with his blood.
 He left the field afoot, he scaled the heights,
 And armed and armoured hurried to the river.
 He made the passage, wounded as he was,
 With all his body full of arrow-heads;
 But still methinketh, when he reacheth home,
 His soul will quit it and to Saturn roam."

V. 1701

¹ The same collocation of consonants means "breath" and "tail" in Persian. Mohl renders "qui a saisi sur la plaine la queue des léopards." Rustam, however, seems to be compared to a dragon drawing in its prey with its breath. Cf. p. 127 for a similar passage, where Mohl translates "Les chevaux cherchaient à se soustraire à l'attaque du dragon, mais il aspira avec son souffle et les engloutit ainsi que le chariot," and where the same expression is used of Asfandiyār himself in the preceding couplet "He drew his breath." Similarly in Gurgsār's account of the same dragon (p. 126), Mohl translates "qui attire avec son haleine le poisson de la mer." When, however, Asfandiyār subsequently speaks of his adventure with this dragon to Gurgsār (p. 128), Mohl translates "O homme vil de corps et sans valeur, regarde ce vaillant dragon qui enveloppait ses victimes avec sa queue," and in the passage referring to the dragon of Tús (p. 203) "il attirait avec sa queue l'éléphant." Again, in the account of Gushtāsp's encounter with a dragon (vol iv. p. 346), he translates "Quand le dragon vit sa haute stature, il essaya de l'attirer vers lui avec sa queue." Mohl therefore wavers. The mode of defence adopted by the two heroes—a long sword in one case and a chariot bristling with sword-blades in the other—seems intended to counteract what appears to be somewhat a characteristic of the eastern dragon. "From Candahar is reported a Mussulman legend, which relates that in pagan times the king of Candahar found himself compelled to promise a young girl every day to a dragon. Accordingly a maiden mounted on a camel was daily sent to the monster. As soon as the camel arrived within a certain distance of the cavern where the dragon dwelt, the latter inhaled its breath with such force that its prey was inevitably drawn into its throat."—ILP, iii. 56.

§ 24

How Rustam took Counsel with his Kin

Now Rustam for his part regained his palace
 Where Zál beheld him in his grievous plight.
 Zawára too and Farámarz shed tears,
 And were consumed by sorrow for his wounds.
 Rúdába, when she heard the others' cries,
 Began to pluck her hair and tear her face.
 Zawára came and, loosing Rustam's girdle,¹
 Removed his armour and the tiger-skin,
 While all the skilful gathered at the door,
 But Rustam bade to take them first to Rakhsh.
 Shrewd Zál plucked his own hair and laid his cheeks
 On Rustam's wounds, and cried: "That I should live
 Hoar-headed to behold my dear son thus!"

Then Rustam said: "What booteth to bewail?
 That which hath happened is by Heaven's decree.
 The matter now confronting me is harder,
 More fearful to my soul, for ne'er have I
 Beheld the equal of Asfandiyár,
 The brazen-bodied, for courageousness
 In time of battle. I have roamed the world,
 And wotted both of sights and mysteries.
 I took the White Dív by the waist and hurled him
 Down to the ground as 'twere a willow-branch.²

V. 1702

My poplar shafts were wont to pierce an anvil,
 And scorn a shield. I often hit with them
 The armour of Asfandiyár, but they
 Proved thorns 'gainst stone! Again, the pards on
 seeing

My sword would skulk beneath the rocks and yet
 It will not cleave the breastplate on his breast,
 Or e'en a bit of silk upon his head!

¹ Reading with P² Vol. ii. p. 60.

However oft too I excuse myself,
 That I may warm that stony heart of his,
 He only seeketh to disgrace me more
 By words and actions full of arrogance.
 Thank God ! night came, and when he could not see
 I 'scaped this Dragon's claws I know not how
 To seek release. Mine only course, methinketh,
 Tomorrow will be to abandon Rakhsh,
 And fare to where the prince will find me not.
 Let him strew heads within Zábulistán :
 He will grow weary of the work in time,
 Though not soon sick of ill."

Zál said : " Alas !

My son ! give ear and, talking done, grow calm.
 There is a way from all contingencies
 On earth save death which is itself a way.
 I know of one resource ; use it, for I
 Herein will summon the Símurgh to aid.
 If for the future she will be my guide
 Our lands and borders will be saved for us ;
 Else by Asfandiyár that brave knave's hand
 Will utter ruin come upon our land."

§ 25

How the Símurgh succoured Rustam

When both were set on this bold project Zál,
 The well-beloved, went to a lofty height,
 And carried from the palace censers three
 Containing fire. With him went three brave sages.
 Now when the wizard reached the top he drew
 Forth from brocade a plume of the Símurgh
 And, having raised a flame within a censor,
 Consumed therein a portion of the feather.¹
 Whenas the first watch of the night had passed

V. 1703

¹ Cf. Vol. 1. pp. 246, 320.

Thou wouldst have said : " The face of air is darkened !"
 And gazing from the eminence Zál saw it
 Filled with the fluttering plumes of the Símurgh.
 Just then the bird, surveying from the air
 And seeing fire ablaze with Zál before it
 Set seared and sad, swooped down upon the dust.
 Beholding the Símurgh he praised her greatly,
 And did obeisance, filling up the censers
 With incense in her presence and surcharging
 His cheeks with his heart's blood. Said the Símurgh :—
 " What was't, O king ! that made thee need these
 fumes ? "

Zál answered : " May the ills that miscreants
 Have brought upon me fall upon my foes.
 The body of the lion-hearted Rustam
 Hath been bewounded, and my care for him
 Hath fettered me. In short his injuries
 Raise fears about his life , none hath beheld
 A man so stricken , thou wouldst say withal
 That Rakhsh is dying, he is writhing so
 With anguish from the shafts. Asfandiyár
 Hath come against our land and knocketh only
 Upon the door of war. He asketh not
 For land or crown or throne, but he would have
 The tree yield root and fruit ! "

Said the Símurgh —

" O paladin ! be not distressed hereat,
 But let me presently see Rakhsh and him,
 The exalted chief who meteth out the world."

Then Zál sent one to Rustam with these words —
 " Make shift, I prithee, to bestir thyself,
 And give, moreover, orders that they bring
 Rakhsh instantly to the Símurgh."

When Rustam
 Came to the height to that sagacious bird
 She said . " O mighty, raging Elephant !

By hand of whom hast thou grown thus distressed ?
 Why didst thou seek to fight Asfandiyār ?
 Why kindle thine own breast ? ”

Zāl said to her .—

“ O queen of love ! since thou hast shown to us
 Thy holy face, say where shall I take refuge
 If Rustam be not healed ? They will lay waste
 Sístán, will turn it to a lair for leopards
 And lions, and our race will be uprooted.
 Now in what manner shall we deal with Rustam ? ”

The bird surveyed and sought to heal the wounds,
 Sucked them and, drawing forth eight arrow-heads,
 Stroked with her feathers on the wounded parts,
 And Rustam was restored to might and Grace.
 She said : “ Bind up thy hurts and for a week
 Shun danger, moisten one of these my feathers
 With milk and stroke therewith inside the wounds.”

She in like manner having called for Rakhsh
 Employed her beak on him to make him whole,
 And drew out from his neck six arrow-heads—
 All that there were. Rakhsh neighed. The crown-
 bestower
 Laughed for delight.

“ O elephantine one ! ”

V. 1705

Said the Símurgh, “ thou art most famed of folk.
 Why didst thou seek to fight Asfandiyār,
 The brazen-bodied and illustrious ? ”

He made reply : “ He talked of binding me,
 Else I had not been vexed, but I prefer
 Death to disgrace if in my present straits
 I shun the fight.”

She said : “ ’Tis no disgrace
 To stoop to dust before Asfandiyār,
 Because he is a warrior and a prince,
 A holy man who hath the Grace of God.
 If thou wilt make a covenant with me,

Be penitent for having sought the fight,
 And seek not triumph o'er Asfandiyár,
 The work of war or moment of revenge,
 But make submission to him on the morrow,
 And proffer soul and body for his ransom,
 Then if his time be coming to an end
 No doubt he will regard not thine excuses.
 For such an issue I will furnish thee,
 And sunward raise thy head."

When Rustam heard

He joyed and put away all thought of strife;
 He said: "I will not disobey thy words
 Although the air rain swords upon my head."

Said the Símurgh to him. "I will declare
 In love to thee the secret of the sky:
 Whoe'er shall shed that hero's blood will be
 Himself pursued by fortune. Furthermore
 Throughout his life he will abide in travail,
 Find no escape therefrom, and lose his treasures,
 Be luckless in this world and afterward
 In pain and anguish. If thou art content
 With this, and present triumph o'er thy foe,
 I will reveal to thee this night a wonder,
 And bar for thee the lip from evil words."

V. 1706

"I am content," he said to her, "and now
 Say what thou wilt. We leave the world behind
 As our memorial and pass away,
 And there is nothing left of any man
 Save the report of him. If I shall die
 With fair fame all is well with me, but fame
 I must have for the body is for death."¹

"Go and mount Rakhsh," she said, "and choose a
 dagger,
 A bright one."

When he heard he girt his loins

¹ Rustam's speech is inserted from C. Both V and P omit it.

And, mounting, fared until he reached the sea,¹
 And saw the air all dark with the Símurgh.
 When Rustam had arrived beside the waters
 That noble bird descended, and he saw,
 Sprung from the soil and with its head in air,
 A tamarisk, and on it perched that fowl
 Imperious She showed him a dry path,
 The scent of musk exhaling from her breath,
 Then bidding him come near to her she stroked
 The feathers of her wing upon his head.
 "Choose out the straightest, longest, slenderest bough,"
 She said to him, "because this tamarisk
 Is fatal to Asfandiyár; so hold not
 This wood of small account Let it be straightened
 Before the fire, choose good, old arrow-heads,
 And fit it with three feathers and two points.
 Now have I shown thee how to work him woo."

When Rustam had cut off the branch he went
 Back from the sea toward his hall and hold
 With the Símurgh still acting as his guide,
 And, as she kept above his head, she said :—
 "Now when Asfandiyár shall seek to fight thee
 Petition him, ask him to do thee right,
 And knock not at the door of loss. Perchance
 Soft words may turn him, and he may recall
 Old times, for thou hast lived so long in toil
 And hardship for the great. If he reject
 All that thou canst advance, and if he treat thee
 As one of little worth, string up thy bow,
 And set thereon this shaft of tamarisk,

V. 1707

¹ Of Chín, according to C; or the legend may owe somewhat to Zoroastrian mythology (see Vol. 1 p. 235); or the lake of Sístán may be intended. Asfandiyár's fate lay in Sístán, and it seems fitting that both the fatal shaft and the user of it should come from that neighbourhood. The tamarisk, with its long, slender branches, grows there, and is the only shrub that aspires to be called a tree in that otherwise treeless region.

This fosterling of bane. Aim at his eyes,
 Straight, with both hands as one that worshipping
 The tamarisk, and Destiny will bear
 The arrow thither straight. He will be blinded,
 And fortune rage at him."

Then the Símurgh,
 Embracing Zál as woof embraceth warp
 In bidding him farewell, took flight content,
 While Rustam, when he saw her in the air,
 Took order to prepare a goodly fire,
 And straightened out thereby the tamarisk wood.
 He fitted arrow-heads upon the shaft,
 And fixed the feathers to the finished haft.

§ 26

How Rustam went back to fight Asfandiyár

When dawn brake from the heights, and dark night's
 waist

V 1708

Arched, Rustam armed himself and much invoked
 The Maker. When he reached the famous host,
 For war and vengeance on Asfandiyár,
 The hero, good at need, cried in reproach :—
 "O lion-heart ! how long wilt slumber thus,
 For Rustam hath already saddled Rakhsh ?
 Arouse thee from thy pleasant sleep and close
 In fight with Rustam eager for the fray."

Now when Asfandiyár heard Rustam's voice
 All earthly weapons seemed of no avail,
 And thus he said to Bishútan · "The Lion
 Adventureth not against a sorcerer.
 I did not think that Rustam would bear home
 His coat of mail, his tiger-skin, and casque,
 While as for Rakhsh, his mount, its breast was hidden
 By arrow-heads ! Now I have heard that Zál,
 The devotee of sorcerers, extendeth

E'en to the sun his practices, surpasseth
 All warlocks in his wrath, and sorteth not
 With wisdom."

Bishútan replied in tears :—

"Be care and wrath thy foe's. What hath come o'er
 thee

That thou art wan to-day? Thou must have passed
 A sleepless night! What in the world can ail
 These heroes that they must increase such toils?
 Whose fortune hath gone halt I know not I
 In that it ever bringeth feud on feud!"

Asfandiyár, the hero, donned his mail,
 Advanced toward famous Rustam and, on seeing
 His face, exclaimed: "Now may thine honour perish!
 Perchance thou hast forgot, thou Sigzian!
 Thy foeman's bow and breast? Thou hast been healed
 By Zál's enchantments; otherwise the charnel
 Had sought for thine embrace. But thou hast gone,
 Hast used unholy arts, and hastenest thus
 To fight with me Today will I so maul thee
 That Zál shall see thee living never more."

V. 1709

"O Lion never satiate of fight!"

Said Rustam, "reverence holy God, the World-lord,
 And fling not heart and wisdom to the abyss.
 I have not come today for fighting's sake,
 But for excuse, for honour, and for fame.
 Thy whole contention with me is unjust,
 And thou art closing both the eyes of wisdom.
 By just Zarduhsht and by the good religion,
 By Núsh Ázar, the Fire, and Grace divine,
 By sun, by moon, and by the Zandavasta,
 I prithee turn thy heart from mischief's path.
 Keep not in memory the words that passed,
 Though they would cause a man to burst his skin.
 Come then and see the place of mine abode,
 For thou hast lost all power upon my life.

I will unlock the door of ancient treasures,
 Which I have gotten me in my long day,
 And load them on mine own beasts. Give thou them
 All to thy treasurer to drive before him.
 Moreover I will travel by thy side
 And, if thou biddest, go before the Sháh.
 Then if he slayeth me I am content,
 Content too if he biddeth me be bound.
 Consider what the wise man said of old :—
 ‘May none be wedded to a luckless star.’
 I will try all expedients in the hope
 That fortune may distaste thee with this strife.”

V. 1710 Asfandiyár replied. “I am not one
 To use deceit in time of war or fear.
 Thou pratest much of hall and house, much lavest
 The face of peace. If still thou wilt live on
 First wear my chains.”

Then Rustam loosed again
 His tongue, and said: “O prince! renounce injustice.
 Blast not my name, degrade not thine own soul,
 For ill alone can come of this contention.
 A thousand royal jewels will I give thee,
 As well as crown with armlet and with earrings,
 Will give to thee a thousand sweet-lipped youths
 To minister to thee by day and night;
 Will give a thousand damsels of Khallukh
 To be the glorious graces of thy crown;
 I will unbar for thee the treasury
 Of Sám, the son of Narímán, and Zál,
 O peerless one! amass thee all their wealth,
 And from Kábulistán bring men withal
 To do thy will and chase thy foes in fight.
 Then like a bond-slave will I go before thee,
 Go to the presence of the wreakful Sháh,
 But, O my prince! put vengeance from thy heart,
 Make not thyself an ambush for the Dív.

Thou hast another power than that of bonds,
 Thou art my monarch and thou servest God.
 Doth ill become thee, for thy bonds would shame me
 For ever?"

But Asfandiyár replied :—

"How long wilt thou talk idly? 'Quit,' thou sayest,
 'God's path and what the veteran Shah commandeth.'
 But he that goeth from the Shah's behest
 Defraudeth God. Choose either fight or bond,
 And cease to utter words that are but fond."

§ 27

How Rustam shot Asfandiyár in the Eyes with an Arrow

When Rustam knew that humbleness availed not V. 1711
 Before Asfandiyár he strung his bow,
 And set therein the shaft of tamarisk
 With baneful points, and said: "O Lord of sun
 And moon, who makest knowledge, Grace, and strength
 To wax! Thou seest my mind pure in intent,
 My soul, and self control, for much I toil
 To turn Asfandiyár from strife. Thou knowest
 That his contention is unjust, and how V. 1712
 His traffic with me is all fight and prowess;
 So visit not my crime with retribution,
 O Maker of the moon and Mercury!"

Asfandiyár perceived him tarrying long
 From strife, and said to him: "O famous Rustam!
 Thy soul is satiate of fight, but now
 Thou shalt behold the arrows of Gushtásp,
 Luhrásp's own arrow-heads and lion-heart."

Then Rustam quickly fitted to his bow
 The tamarisk-shaft as the Símurgh had bidden;
 He struck Asfandiyár full in the eyes,
 And all the world grew dark before that chief;

The straight-stemmed Cypress bent, intelligence
 And Grace abandoned him. The pious prince
 Fell prone, his bow of Chách dropped from his hands.
 He clutched his black steed by the mane and crest ;
 The battlefield was reddened with his blood.
 Said Rustam : "Thou hast brought this evil seed
 To fruit ! Thou art the man who said'st : 'My form
 Is brazen, and I dash high heaven to earth.'
 Yet through one arrow hast thou turned from strife,
 And fallen swooning on thy noble charger.
 Moreover now thy head will come to dust,
 And thy fond mother's heart will burn for thee."

V. 1713 Meanwhile the famous prince had tumbled headlong
 Down from his black steed's back and lay awhile
 Till he recovered consciousness, sat up
 Amid the dust, and listened. Then he seized
 The arrow by its end and drew it out,
 Drew it out soaked in blood from point to feather.

When presently the tidings reached Bahman.—
 "The Grace divine of empire is obscured,"
 He went to Bishútan and said : "Our war
 Hath wedded woe, the mighty Elephant's body
 Hath come to dust, and this distress hath turned
 The world to an abyss for us."

They both

Ran from the army to the paladin.
 They saw the warrior with his breast all blood,
 And with a gory arrow in his hand.
 Then Bishútan cast dust upon his head
 And rent his raiment, uttering loud cries ;
 Bahman rolled in the dust and rubbed his cheeks
 Upon the yet warm blood.

Said Bishútan :—

"What chief or noble knoweth this world's secrets
 Since an Asfandiyár, who for the Faith
 So bravely drew the scimitar of vengeance,

Who purged the world of foul idolatry,
 And never set his hand to work injustice,
 Hath perished in the heyday of his youth ?
 The head that wore the crown hath come to dust,
 While o'er the bad man's head, who bringeth anguish
 Upon the world and harroweth the souls
 Of noble men, unnumbered seasons pass,
 Because he seeth not mischance in war."

The two youths took his head upon their breasts,
 And wiped away the gore, while Bishútán,
 With cheeks all tears of blood and heart all anguish,
 Made lamentation over him, and said :—

"Alack, O warrior Asfandiyár,
 The world-lord and the progeny of kings !
 Who tore this warrior-mountain from its place ?
 Who overthrew this furious Lion ? Who drew
 The tusks redoubted of this Elephant,
 And flung him to the waters of the Nile ?
 Is our race blasted by the evil eye,
 For evil surely is for those that do it ?
 Where are thy courage, thine intelligence,
 Thine usages, thy strength, thy star, thy Faith ?
 Where is thy splendid equipage in war ?
 Where is thy gracious voice at festivals ?
 What time thou purged'st all the world of foes
 Thou feared'st not the lion or the div,
 And now, when thou shouldst profit by the work,
 I see thee bite the dust !"

V. 1714

Asfandiyár

Made answer wisely : "Shrewd and prosperous man !
 Distract not thou thyself before me thus,
 For sky and moon allotted me this fate.
 Dust is the dead man's couch ; bewail not then
 So grievously my slaughter. Where are now
 Húshang, Jamshíd, and Farídún ? They came
 From wind and vanished in a breath ! Thus too

V. 1715 Have mine own ancestors, pure-born, elect,
 And high and holy, gone and left their room
 To us. None stayeth in this Wayside Inn.
 In this world have I toiled exceedingly
 In public and in private to establish
 The way of God and wisdom as the guide
 Thereto, but when through me the enterprise
 Had grown illustrious, and when the hands
 Of Áhriman were barred from wickedness,
 Fate stretched its lion's claws and brought me down
 As though an onager! And now my hope
 Is that in Paradise my heart and soul
 May reap what they have sown. The son of Zál
 Hath slain me not by prowess. Mark what I
 Have in my hand—a shaft of tamarisk!
 That wood hath closed my lifetime by the practice
 Of the Símurgh and of resourceful Rustam,
 While Zál himself, the adept in grammarye,
 Performed the sorceries.”

When Asfandiyár
 Spake of that matter Rustam writhed and wept
 For agony and, coming to the prince,
 Stood pierced by grief and very sorrowful,
 Then spake to Bishútán and said in anguish :—
 “ One should acknowledge prowess in a man.
 ’Tis as he said, he did not change from prowess
 To guile. In sooth ’twas through some felon dív
 That fate assigned to me this grievous lot,
 For since for prowess’ sake I girt my loins,
 And sought to fight with chiefs, I have not seen
 Arrayed in hauberk and with war-cuirass
 A cavalier like to Asfandiyár.
 When, after trial of his bow, his breast,
 And grip, I left the battle in despair
 I sought a shift in mine extremity
 To save my head from him for good and all.

I set his destiny upon my bow,
 And when his day had come I shot the arrow.
 Had fortune been with him how could a shaft
 Of tamarisk avail me any whit?
 We all shall have to leave this darksome earth,
 No caution will prolong our lives one breath.
 Good sooth, for this I shall be marked for ill.
 And live in story with the tamarisk still!"

§ 28

How Asfandiyár told his last Wishes to Rustam

Then thus to Rustam spake Asfandiyár:—
 "My time is at an end. Avoid me not,
 Arise and come to me, since all our schemes
 Are changed, that thou mayst hear my last requests
 Upon my son's behalf—my chieftest Pearl.
 Use all thine efforts to establish him,
 Endowing him with greatness as his guide."

V. 1716

The matchless Rustam hearkened to his words,
 Dismounted, wailing, and approached on foot.
 He poured down tears of blood for very shame,
 And muttered to himself lugubriously.

When Zál gat tidings of that battlefield
 He set forth from his palace, like the wind.
 Zawára too and Farámarz went forth,
 Like madmen, to the indicated spot.

A wail ascended from that scene of strife:—

"The faces of the sun and moon are darkened."

Zál spake to Rustam, saying: "O my son!
 I weep for thee betimes in pain of heart,
 For I have heard from readers of the stars,
 From archimages, and the men of lore:—
 'The slayer of Asfandiyár shall be
 The prey of fortune, while he liveth see
 Both pain and stress, and pass to misery.'"

V. 1717

Thus spake Asfandiyár to Rustam, saying :—
 "Thou art not author of mine evil fortune
 This was my fate ; what was to be hath been ;
 None knoweth the secrets of yon azure vault
 Not Rustam or Símurgh or bow and arrow
 Have robbed my body of its life in battle,
 For that hath been the doing of Gushtásp,
 And little blessing hath my soul for him.
 He said to me : ' Go and burn up Sístán,
 From this time forth I would have no Nímruz.'
 He laboured that the army, crown, and treasure
 Should stay with him, and I abide in toil ;
 And now do thou with loving heart receive
 From me the charge of this my noble son,
 Bahman, wise, watchful, and my minister,
 And what thou hearest from me bear in mind.
 Keep him in gladness in Zábulistán,
 Remembering what evil men may say,
 Instruct him to array the host and order
 The chase, the combat, and the festival,
 The revel, minstrelsy, and polo, make
 A great man of him both in deed and word.
 Jámásp, once famed, and may he prosper never !
 Said that Bahman would keep my name alive,
 And be a greater king, and that his seed
 Would be illustrious and deserve to reign "

The matchless Rustam, hearing, stood and laid
 His right hand on his breast in acquiescence.
 "E'en if I die I will not fail herein,"
 He said, "but bring thy words to pass, will set
 Bahman upon the famous ivory throne,
 And crown him with the heart-illuming crown."

Asfandiyár, on hearing Rustam's words,
 Replied to him : " O ancient paladin !
 Know this, and God Himself will bear me witness
 Who is my leader to the good religion,

That in despite of all thy noble acts,
And of thy head exalted by brave deeds,
Thy fame now hath been turned to infamy,
And earth grown clamorous for me. Herefrom
Crooked grew thy spirit's lot ; so willed the Maker."

V 1718

Then spake he thus to Bishútan : " A shroud
Is all I need of this world. When I quit
This Wayside Inn take order for the host,
And lead it home. When thou hast reached Írán
Say to my sire : ' Since thou hast gained thine end
Dissemble not ; the age is all thine own ;
Thy name is written now on every signet.
I had some hope of better things from thee,
Though such a crime befitted thy dark soul.
Reformed by me and by the sword of justice
The world was purged of miscreants' villainies,
And, with the good Faith stablished in Írán,
Both majesty and kingship called for me ;
But thou didst speak me fair before the nobles,
And privily dispatch me to be slain.
Now thou hast gained thy heart's desire herein ,
Take order then and sit with heart at ease,
And, since thou art secure, ban death itself,
And hold high revel in thy royal halls.
The throne is thine, the stress and toil are mine ;
Thine is the crown and mine are bier and shroud.
What said the rustic minstrel old and tried ?
" Death followeth hard upon the arrow-point."
Trust not in treasure, crown, and throne. My soul
Will have its eyes on thy career, and when
Thou comest, and we go before the Judge
Together, we will plead and hear His sentence.'
When thou hast left Gushtásp say to my mother :—
' This time 'twas Death that challenged me to fight,
And mail is only wind before his arrows,
For they would penetrate a mount of steel.

O loving mother ! follow me with speed ;
 Grieve not for my sake nor aggrieve thy soul.
 Show not thy face unveiled before the folk,
 Or lift the winding-sheet to gaze on mine,
 For such a sight will but increase thy woe,
 And men of wisdom will commend thee not.'
 Say likewise to my sisters and my wife,
 Those wise and noble dames who shared with me
 My private hours : ' Farewell for evermore !
 Ill hath befall'n me through my father's crown ;
 To him my death hath been the key of treasures.
 Behold I have sent Bishútán to him
 To shame his gloomy soul ' "

V. 1719

He spake, then gasped :—

" This wrong hath come upon me from Gushtásp."

With that his pure soul parted from his body,
 Which lay shaft-stricken on the darksome dust,
 While Rustam, with his head and face besmirched
 With dust, rent all his raiment o'er the prince,
 And cried : " Alack ! O valiant cavalier,
 Whose grandsire was a warrior Sháh, whose sire
 A king ! I had a good name in the world,
 But through Gushtásp mine end is infamous."

Long while he wept and then addressed the slain :—
 " O monarch peerless, matchless in the world !
 Thy soul hath passed to Paradise above,
 And may thy foeman reap what he hath sown."

Zawára said to him : " Make not thyself
 Dependent on the mercy of this prince.
 Hast thou not heard this adage from the sage,
 Who quoteth from the sayings of old times :—
 ' If thou shalt take a lion's whelp to rear
 'Twill grow ferocious when its teeth appear,
 And, soon being set on prey and waxen tall,
 Will fall upon its feeder first of all ' ?
 Both sides will be perturbed by evil wrath,

Whence first the ill will come upon Írán,
 Since such a monarch as Asfandiyár
 Was slain; then thou wilt see thine own ill day,
 Zábulistán will suffer from Bahman,
 The veterans of Kábulistán will writhe.
 Mark this, that, when he cometh to be king,
 Forthwith he will avenge Asfandiyár."

To him said Rustam: "No one, bad or good,
 Can strive with heaven. So will I choose my course
 That wisdom, seeing, will restore my fame.
 Fate will avenge if he doth wickedly,
 But do not thou provoke the evil eye."

V 1720

§ 29

How Bishútan bore the Coffin of Asfandiyár to Gushtásp

Then Rustam made a goodly iron coffin;
 He draped the outside with brocade of Chín,
 And smeared with pitch the inside, sprinkling it
 With musk and spicery. He made withal
 The winding-sheet of gold-inwoven brocade,
 While all that noble company lamented.
 When he had shrouded that resplendent form,
 And crowned it with a turquoise coronet,
 They sealed the narrow coffin and the Tree
 So fruitful and so royal was no more.
 Then Rustam chose him forty camels, each
 Clad in a housing of brocade of Chín.
 One of the camels bore the prince's coffin
 With carnels right and left, and guards behind
 With hair and faces rent. One theme alone
 Possessed their tongues and souls—Asfandiyár.
 Before the cavalcade went Bishútan.
 Asfandiyár's black charger had been docked,
 Both mane and tail, its saddle was reversed,

And from it there were hung his battle-mace,
 His famous helm withal, surtout and quiver
 And head-piece. They set forward, but Bahman
 Stayed at Zábul and wept with tears of blood.
 Him matchless Rustam carried to the palace,
 And tendered as his life.

News reached Gushtásp :—

“The famous prince’s head hath been o’erthrown !”

V. 1721

He rent his robes, his crowned head came to dust,
 A bitter wail rose from Írán, the world
 Rang with Asfandiyár. Throughout the realm,
 Where’er the tidings came, the nobles doffed
 Their crowns. Gushtásp exclaimed : “O pure of Faith !
 Time and the earth will not behold thy like,
 For ever since the days of Minúchihr
 There hath not come a chief resembling thee
 Who fouled the sword and fulled the Faith, and kept
 The world on its foundations.”

In their wrath

The nobles of Írán put off all awe
 For Sháh Gushtásp, and cried : “Thou luckless one !
 To save thy throne thou sentest to Zábul,
 For slaughter there, the great Asfandiyár
 That thou mightst don the crown of all the world.
 May thy head shame to wear the crown of Sháhs,
 Hot-foot thy star desert thee !”

In a body

They left the palace, and the monarch’s crown
 And star were in the dust.

Now when the mother

And sisters of Asfandiyár had heard,
 They came forth from the palace with their daughters,
 Unveiled, with dust-fouled feet, and raiment rent.
 When Bishútan came weeping on his way,
 And after him the coffin and black steed,
 The women hung on him, wept tears of blood,

And cried : " Undo this narrow coffin's lid,
Let us too see the body of the slain."

He stood among the women, full of grief,
Mid groans and sobs and beatings of the cheeks.
Then said he to the smiths : " Bring sharp files hither,
For this is Resurrection Day to me."

He oped the covering of the narrow coffin,
And gave fresh cause for weeping. When the mother
And sisters of Asfandiyár beheld
His visage steeped in musk, and sable beard,
The hearts of those chaste ladies crisp of lock
Filled to o'erflowing, and they swooned away.
Revived, they prayed to glorious Surúsh,
Departed from the pillow of the prince,
And went with wailing to his sable steed,
Whose neck and head they fondled lovingly,
And Katáyún flung dust thereon. The prince
Had ridden that charger on the fatal day,
And perished on its back. The mother said :—
" O thou of luckless feet ! the Kaian prince
Was slain on thee. Whom wilt thou bear to battle
Henceforth and yield up to the Crocodile ? "

V. 1722

They clasped its neck and strewed its head with dust,
The host's cries reached the clouds, and Bishútan
Approached the palace. Coming to the throne
He kissed it not, nor did the Sháh obeisance,
But cried : " O chief of chiefs ! the sign hath come
Of thine undoing. Herein thou hast done ill
To thine own self by robbing kings of breath.
Both Grace and wisdom have abandoned thee,
And thou wilt suffer chastisement divine.
Thy main support is shattered, famous Sháh !
And henceforth thou wilt grasp but wind alone.
To keep thy throne thou giv'st thy son to slaughter,
And may thine eye behold not crown and fortune.
The world is full of foes and evil men,

Thy crown will not endure eternally,
Abuse will be thy portion in this world,
And inquisition at the Judgment Day."

V. 1723

This said, he turned his face toward Jámásp,
And cried: "O impious wretch and ill of rede'
Thou never speakest aught but lying words,
And thou hast made thy fame by knavery.
Thou art the cause of feud between the Kaians,
And settest them the one against the other.
Thou canst not teach them aught but wickedness,
To break away from good and take to ill.
In this world thou hast sown one seed, and thou
Wilt reap the fruits in public and in private.
A magnate hath been slaughtered through thy words:
Thou saidst: 'The lifetime of the great is over.'
Thou didst instruct the Sháh in evil ways,
Old ill-adviser and malevolent!
Thou saidst: 'Asfandiyár the hero's life
Is lying in the grasp of famous Rustam.'"

This said, he loosed his tongue and weeping told
The counsel and last wishes of the dead,
And told too how the prince had given Bahman
To Rustam's keeping Bishútan told all.
The Sháh, on hearing those last words, repented
About the matter of Asfandiyár.

The nobles having gone forth from the palace,
Humái and Bih Áfríd approached their sire,
And in his presence tore their cheeks and plucked
Their hair in sorrow for their brother, saying:—
"O famous monarch! heed'st thou not at all
Asfandiyár's decease, who was the first
To venge Zarír and take the Onager
Out of the Lion's claws, exacted vengeance
Upon the Turkmans and restored thy sway?
But thou didst bind him at a slanderer's words
With heavy yoke and iron bars and lasso.

While he was in his bonds Luhrásp was slain,
 And all the army's fortune overthrown.
 When from Khallukh Arjásp arrived at Balkh
 Our lives were rendered bitter by distress.
 Us, who had ne'er appeared unveiled, he bore
 Uncovered from the palace to the street,
 Quenched Núsh Ázar established by Zarduhsht,¹
 And laid his hand upon the sovereignty.
 Thou sawest what thy son achieved by valour,
 He made thy foes breath, vapour, flying dust,
 Restored us to thee from the Brazen Hold,
 And guarded both thine army and thy realm;
 But thou didst send him to Zábul and give him
 No lack of counsel and of parting words
 With the intent that he should perish there
 To win the crown. The world was grieved and mourned
 him.

V. 1724

It was not the Símurgh or Zál or Rustam
 That slew him; it was thou, so do not weep!
 May thine own hoary beard cry shame upon thee,
 Who, merely in the hope of reigning on,
 Hast slain thy son. There hath been many a world-
 lord

Before thee, worthy of the royal throne:
 They gave not child nor any of their kin,
 Or their allies or household, to be slain."

Thereat the Sháh spake thus to Bishútan:—
 "Rise and fling water on my daughters' fire."

Then Bishútan departed from the palace,
 And took the ladies, saying to his mother:—
 "Why mourn him sleeping well and happily,
 Tired of the land and of the lord thereof?
 Why is thy heart in grief on his account,
 For now his conversation is in Heaven?"

The mother took her son's rede and therewith

¹ See p. 92 and *note*

Resigned her to the justice of the Lord.
 For one year afterward in every dwelling
 Were wailing and lament throughout Írán,
 Both morn and eve the folk mourned bitterly
 The tamarisk arrow and Zál's sorcery.

§ 30

How Rustam sent Bahman back to Írán

V. 1725 Bahman stayed in Zábulistán, enjoying
 The hunting-field and wine among the roses,
 While Rustam taught that enemy of his
 To ride, to quaff, and play the monarch's part,
 In all things holding him above a son,
 And, night and day, embracing him with smiles.

Now when performance was allied to promise,
 And when Gushtásp had no door of revenge
 Still open, Rustam wrote in deep distress
 Of all the matter of Asfandiyár.
 The letter first called blessings down on those
 Who take excuses and forego revenge,
 Then "God is witness" he went on to say,
 "And Bishútan herein hath been before me,
 How much I pleaded with Asfandiyár
 That so he might abandon thoughts of fight.
 I offered ¹ him my treasure and my realm,
 But he preferred all trouble for himself.
 His fate was such that when it stood revealed
 My heart was filled with pain and love withal.
 Heaven turned above us to the destined end,
 And Destiny regardeth none. Bahman,
 The atheling, is with me now and he
 Outshineth even mine own Jupiter.
 I have instructed him in kingly parts,

¹ Reading with P.

And paid the debt of thy son's last request
 With wisdom. If the Sháh will undertake
 To pardon me, and to forget the past,
 All—soul and body—that I have are his,
 Both crown and treasure and both brain and skin.”

Whenas this reached the monarch of the world V 1726
 He was perturbed in presence of his lords,
 And Bishútan came forth to testify,
 Repeating all the words that Rustam used,
 His grief, his counsel, and his last appeal,
 And goodly offer of his realm and treasure
 The famous Sháh was reconciled to Rustam,
 And ceased thenceforth to inflame his heart with sorrow.
 He wrote forthwith a letter in response,
 He set a tree within the garth of greatness,
 And said thus: “From the circle of high heaven
 What time calamity is imminent
 Can any keep it back by circumspection
 Though much inclined to wisdom? Bishútan
 Hath told me what thy real intentions were,
 And by thy goodness thou hast touched my heart,
 But who escapeth from the turning sky?
 A wise man dwelleth not upon the past,
 Thou art as ever thou hast been or better,
 Thou art the lord of Hind and of Kannúj.
 Ask whatsoever thou desirest more
 By way of throne and signet, sword and casque.”

As bidden by Gushtásp the messenger
 Conveyed that answer quickly. It rejoiced
 The famous paladin who felt his heart
 Released from care.

Meanwhile young prince Bahman
 Grew into lofty stature; he was wise,
 Instructed, masterful, and shone with more
 Than royal Grace and state. Jámásp, aware
 That both for good and ill the sovereignty

Would come upon Bahman, said to Gushtásp:—

“O Sháh most worshipful! regard Bahman.

He hath the teaching that his father wished,

And hath arrived at man's estate with lustre ,

V 1727 But he hath tarried long abroad, and none

Hath read to him a letter from thyself.

Thou shouldest write to him a letter like

A tree within the garth of Paradise.

What other memory is left to thee

To banish sorrow for Asfandiyár?”

This thing seemed good to Sháh Gushtásp who gave
Command to glorious Jámásp, and said:—

“Indite me now a letter to Bahman,

And one to glory-loving Rustam, saying:—

‘Thank God, O paladin of paladins!

That thou hast made us glad and cleared our mind.

Our grandson, who is dearer than our life,

Is more renowned for wisdom than Jámásp,

And hath acquired with thee both skill and counsel,

Send of thy favour home.’”

That to Bahman

Ran thus: “When thou hast read this quit Zábul,

For we desire to see thee; so make ready,

And tarry not.”

Shrewd Rustam, when the scribe
Had read the letter to him, was rejoiced.

Of what he had within his treasury—

Surtouts and daggers made of watered steel,

Bards, bows and arrows, sparths and Indian hangers,

Fresh aloes, camphor, musk, and ambergris,

Gold, silver, jewelry, brocaded stuffs,

With raiment in the piece, slaves of ripe age

And unripe, golden girdles, silvern bridles,

And two gold cups a-brim with precious stones,

All these he gave Bahman, and they that bore them

Accounted for them to his treasurer.

The matchless Rustam journeyed with Bahman
Two stages, then dispatched him to the Sháh.

The face of Sháh Gushtásp was dim with tears
What time he gazed upon his grandson's face.
He said: "Thou art Asfandiyár himself,
Thou art like no one in the world but him."

V. 1728

The Sháh bestowed on him the name Ardashír,
On seeing what great courage he possessed.¹
He was a stalwart warrior, strong of hand,
A wise man, well-instructed, and devout,
And with his fingers dressed beside his legs
His fists extended lower than his knees²
The Sháh awhile made proof of him and marked
His bearing. On the field, at feast, and chase
He proved a warrior like Asfandiyár,
And never tried the patience of Gushtásp,
Who ever gazed upon him with emotion,
And said: "The World-lord gave him unto me,
Gave him to me because I was in trouble.
May my Bahman live evermore since I
Have lost my noble, brazen-bodied son."

The conflicts of Asfandiyár are o'er,
May our Sháh's head live on for evermore,
His heart from travail ever be at rest,
And may the age conform to his behest,
Glad be his heart, his crown uplifted high,
And round his foe's neck may his lasso lie.

¹ Ardashír is a shortened form of Artakhshathra, *i.e.* "great king," but in native etymology was explained to mean "angry lion."

² See p. 281.

PART IV

THE STORY OF RUSTAM AND SHAGHÁD

ARGUMENT

The poet tells how he came to hear the story of the death of Rustam, which is as follows — Zál had by a female slave a son named Shaghád and, as his horoscope was pronounced to be an unfavourable one by the astrologers, sent him to be educated at Kábul. There he married the king of Kábul's daughter, in consequence of which event the king anticipated that Rustam would remit the yearly tribute due from Kábul, but as this did not prove to be the case, the king and Shaghád plot together to bring about the death of Rustam, who perishes accordingly with his brother Zawára. They are avenged by Rustam's son Farámarz. The Part concludes with the death of Gushtásp and the succession of Bahman as Sháh.

NOTE

One might gather from Firdausí's account of the provenance of this story that he received it personally from the authority whom he calls Ázád Sarv, *i.e.* Noble Cypress. This, however, does not seem to be what the poet meant by his statement. He tells us that Ázád Sarv shed lustre on Sahl, son of Mithán, who was no doubt his patron, and that, after Sahl's death, we may presume, he occupied a similar position in relation to Sahl's son Ahmad.¹ Ahmad was sometime lord of Marv, and died A.D. 919-920,² about twenty years before Firdausí was born. Chronology therefore renders it highly improbable, though not impossible, that Firdausí and Ázád Sarv ever met. It is worth noting that the name of the king of Yaman, whose daughters married the sons of Farídún, was Sarv,³ which is clearly fictitious, also that when Núshírwán, whose reign will appear in a later volume of this translation, had on one occasion an unpleasant dream, and dispatched agents to various regions to find an interpreter, one of them was named

¹ pp. 263, 261

² NIN, § 15.
260

³ See Vol. 1. p. 178.

Ázád Sarv, who went to Marv and was the means of introducing Búzurmíhr, the future chief minister, to the notice of the Sháh. It is not at all unlikely that Firdausí, having on the present occasion to refer to a tradition emanating from Marv, used Sarv, as a convenient rhyme word ¹ The poet's meaning is that, instead of following on this occasion his usual authority—the modern Persian prose version of the *Bástún-náma* ²—he went elsewhere for his account. In the *Bástún-náma*, probably, Rustam remained alive till the next reign, and then was slain with all his house by Bahman ³ Tabarí tells us that Bahman, urged on by his mother, invaded Sístún to avenge on Rustam and his kin the death of Asfandiyúr. Bahman killed Farúmarz, Zúl, and Zawúra, but Rustam himself was already dead ⁴ Mas'údí says that Bahman made war on Rustam, and killed him and his father Zúl. ⁵ With two or more versions of Rustam's death before him, Firdausí evidently chose the most romantic. It was better for the great hero to perish by treachery than in the stricken field against such a puny antagonist as Bahman ⁶ Rustam and Zawúra therefore are disposed of finally during the reign of Gushtásp and before Bahman's expedition to Sístún takes place

We have had already several instances of the enmity between brothers so characteristic of Oriental life. We have seen how Purmáya and Kaurínúsh attempted the life of Farídún, ⁷ how Salm and Túr slew Íraj, ⁸ and we have probably another example in the case of Gurazm and Asfandiyúr. ⁹ Now we have the fatal enmity of Shaghád against Rustam. It is only fair to add, however, that there are signal instances of brothers dwelling together in unity—e.g. Rustam and Zawúra, ¹⁰ Gushtásp and Zarír, ¹¹ and Asfandiyúr and Bishútán. ¹²

§ 1

The Prelude

The tale of Rustam's slaying I present

V. 1729

In mine own words but based on document.

There was an ancient man, hight Ázád Sarv,
Who erst lived with Ahmad, Sahl's son, at Marv.

¹ Vol. i. p. 74.

² *Id.* p. 66 *seq.*, but *cf.* NIN, § 15.

³ *Id.*

⁴ ZT, i. 507.

⁵ MM, ii. 127.

⁶ *Cf.* p. 186.

⁷ Vol. i. p. 160.

⁸ *Id.* 199.

⁹ p. 78, and *cf.* p. 12, JZ, 117.

¹⁰ Vol. ii. pp. 110, 115.

¹¹ Vol. iv. pp. 321, 362, and p. 65.

¹² Parts II. and III

A paladin in form and face was he,
 And storied in the royal legendry.
 His head was full of speech, his heart of lore,
 His tongue of phrases of the days of yore.
 From Sám, the son of Narímán, he drew
 His line and many a fight of Rustam's knew.
 What I received from him I will rehearse,
 And interweave it, word with word, in verse.
 If in this Wayside Inn I still shall bide,
 With mind and wisdom acting as my guide,
 I will complete this story of the past,
 And then on earth my record too will last.

In his name then who hath made earth his own—
 Mahmúd, that glory of the crown and throne,
 Lord of Írán, Túrán, and Hind, through whom
 The world hath grown to be like silk of Rúm!
 He lavisheth his treasures which will be
 Replenished by his fame and policy,
 And he is mighty and in future ages
 Will live upon the lips of all the sages.
 The world is full of his memorials—
 Wars, bounties, huntings, lore and festivals—
 But they among mankind are blest the most,
 Who look upon his crown, his court, and host.

V. 1730 Mine ears and feet begin to fail at length;
 Old age and want have robbed me of my strength;
 Misfortune hath so fettered me that I
 Mourn stress of years and evil destiny;
 Yet am I ever instant in the praise
 Of our just world-lord all my nights and days,
 And all the folk are one with me in that,
 Though faithless and malign, for since he sat
 Upon the royal throne he hath subdued
 The hand of evil and the gate of feud,
 Restraining him that doth presumptuously,
 However overweening he may be,

While bountifully largessing the sage
 That heedeth the prescriptions of his age.
 I raise him in this world a monument,
 Which, while men live, shall be still evident
 In this my story of the Sháhs of old,
 Of bygone horsemen and the great and bold,
 Compact of feast and fight, of ancient lore
 And rede, of many a gest of days of yore,
 Of knowledge, Faith, of scruple and advice,
 And guidance furthermore to Paradise.
 Of all the things that earn our monarch's praise,
 The things of chiefest profit in his days,
 This best will serve to keep his memory rife,
 And live as part and parcel of his life,
 And I am hoping to live too till I
 Receive his gold that, when I come to die,
 I too may leave my monument with things
 Drawn from the treasury of the king of kings.

And now I turn back to the words of Sarv,
 The Light of Sahl, son of Máhán, at Marv.

§ 2

*How Rustam went to Kábul on behalf of his
 Brother Shaghád*

Thus saith the ancient sage, that storied man
 Of parts and eloquence:—Behind Zál's curtains
 There dwelt a slave—a harpist and reciter—
 And this handmaiden bore to him a son
 As radiant as the moon, a horseman Sám
 In form and aspect, and a cause of joy
 To all that noble house. The astrologers
 And men of science—chosen cavaliers
 Both from Kábul and from Kashmír, alike
 The worshippers of God and of the Fire—
 Went with their Rúman tables in their hands,

And each one took the aspect of the sky
 As to its favour toward the little child
 The gazers found a portent in the stars,
 And looked at one another Then they said
 To Zál, the son of Sám, the cavalier :—
 " O thou remembered by the stars of heaven !
 We have explored the secret of the sky ·
 'Tis unpropitious to this little child,
 For when this pretty infant shall grow up,
 And reach the days of strength and hardihood,
 He will destroy the family of Sám,
 The son of Narímán, and wreck their sway.
 Through him Sístán will be fulfilled with uproar,
 Írán embroiled, and all folks' days embittered,
 But afterward his tarriance will be brief."

Zál, son of Sám, was grieved thereat, invoked
 The Judge of all, and prayed : " O Guide of men,
 Sustainer of the turning sky, my Refuge
 And Stay in everything, who showest me
 What rede to follow and what way to go,
 And madest heaven and the stars withal,
 Have we misdoubted of such excellence ?
 Be ours contentment, rest, and happiness "

The chieftain gave his son the name of Shaghád.
 He kept the child till he was weaned and grew
 Observant, full of charm, and talkative ;
 Then, when the boy was growing strong of limb,
 Dispatched him to the monarch of Kábul.
 Now when Shaghád became a lofty Cypress
 In height, a horseman puissant with the lasso
 And mace, that potentate took note of him,
 Esteemed him fit for royal crown and throne,
 Rejoiced to look on him and on account
 Of his high birth bestowed on him a daughter,
 And with that noble daughter sent besides
 Fit presents from the spacious treasury,

And guarded him, as he were some fresh apple,
That ill might not befall him from the stars.

The nobles of Írán and Hindústán
Had much to say of Rustam, for he took
An ox-skin full of money from Kábul
Each year as tribute,¹ wherefore when the king
Had made Shaghád his son-in-law he thought
That Rustam of Zábul would heed no more
The money from that time, so when 'twas due,
And taken as before, Kábulistán
Was deeply moved. His brother's conduct vexed
Shaghád who spake not of it publicly,
But told the king in private. "I am weary
Of this world's doings. I can not respect
A brother who hath no regard for me.
Not recking whether he be wise or mad,
An elder brother or an alien,
Let us concert a plan of snaring him,
And win us in the world a name thereby."

They plotted till they soared above the moon
In their imaginations. Hear the sage :—
"The evil that men do they live to rue."

One night until the sun rose o'er the mountains
Sleep came not to the twain, and thus they said :—
"We will destroy his glory in the world,
And fill the heart and eyes of Zál with tears."

Shaghád said to the monarch of Kábul :—
"If we would do full justice to our scheme
Prepare a festival, invite the nobles,
And call for wine and harp and minstrelsy.

¹ Mohl's view is that the tribute was merely a nominal one—an empty ox-skin, worth one drachm—but in the latter part of the poem at all events ox-skins of coin frequently are mentioned in connexion with the payment of tribute, and it seems on the whole more likely that this particular ox-skin resembled the others and was not an empty one. 'Mohl's "de la valeur d'un dirhem" is hardly justified by the original, which rather means "in the matter of the money," i. e. of the tribute

V. 1733

While we are in our cups speak coldly to me,
 And then insult me. I, dishonoured thus,
 Will set forth for Zábulistán, complain
 About the monarch of Kábulistán
 Before my brother and before my sire,
 And call thee both discourteous and ill-natured.
 Then Rustam will be wroth on mine account,
 And come to our famed city Then do thou
 Select upon his route a hunting-ground,
 And there dig divers pitfalls large enough
 To take both him and Rakhsh, and plant long swords,
 With spears and blades of steel with double edges,
 The handles downward and the points erect,
 About the bottoms of the pits. Of these
 It will be better to make ten than five
 If thou desirest to be freed from care.
 Employ a hundred cunning workmen, dig
 The pits, and keep the secret from the wind ;
 Then make the surface good and hold thy peace."

The monarch went, put prudence from his mind,
 And made a feast as that insensate said,
 Invited great and small throughout Kábul,
 And seated them before a well-spread board.
 When they had eaten they prepared for revol,
 And called for wine and harp and minstrelsy.

Now when folks' heads were flown with royal wine
 Shaghád designedly grew insolent,
 And spake thus to the monarch of Kábul :—
 "I am exalted over all the folk ;
 With Rustam for my brother, Zál for father,
 What nobler strain can any one possess ?"

The king seemed wroth and said : "Why do I keep
 This matter so long hidden ? Thou art not
 By race from Sám, the son of Narínán,
 And neither Rustam's brother nor his kin.
 Zál, son of Sám, hath never mentioned thee ;

How then shall such an one be called thy brother ?
 Thou art slave-born, a menial at his gate,
 And Rustam's mother would not own thy claim."

Shaghád, as angered at the monarch's words,
 Departed in a passion to Zábul
 With certain of Kábul in company,
 Revenge at heart and sighs upon his lips.
 He reached his glorious father's court, his heart
 All inachination and his head all vengeance.
 Zál at the instant that he saw his son,
 So tall and stately, with such Grace divine
 And thews received him kindly, questioned him,
 And sent him on to Rustam presently.
 That paladin rejoiced at seeing him,
 To see him sage and of an ardent soul,
 And said to him · "The seed of Sám, the Lion,
 Produceth only strong and valiant men.
 How do things stand betwixt Kábul and thee ?
 What doth he say of Rustam of Zábul ?"

Shaghád replied : "Nay, speak not of the king.
 He used to treat me kindly and to bless me
 Whene'er he saw me ; now he seeketh a quarrel
 Against me in his cups and holdeth high
 His head o'er all. He humbled me in public,
 And showed his evil bent. He said to me :—
 'How long shall we submit to pay this tribute ?
 Are we unable to resist Sístán ?
 Henceforth I will not mention Rustam ; I
 Am equal to him both in strength and parts.'
 He further said · 'Thou art no son of Zál,
 Or if thou art so he himself is naught.'
 My heart was pained because of those chiefs present,
 And so with pallid cheeks I left Kábul."

When Rustam heard it he was wroth, and said :—
 "No matter lieth hidden for all time.
 Have no more thought of him or of his realm,

And may his crown and sovereignty both perish.
 I will destroy him for his words and wring
 His heart and eyes, will seat thee on his throne
 In joy, and lay in dust his head and fortune."

V 1735

He entertained Shaghád for many days,
 Assigned a stately palace for his use,
 And from his army chose the fittest men—
 Those famed in battle—bidding them prepare
 To leave Zábul and occupy Kábul.

When all was ready, and the paladin
 Freed from anxiety, Shaghád approached
 That man of war, and said: "Think not of fighting
 The monarch of Kábul. Were I to limn
 Thy name on water merely none would rest
 Or slumber there, for who would venture forth
 To strive with thee, or who abide thy coming?
 Sure am I that the monarch is repentant,
 That he would fain atone for my departure,
 And even now is sending from Kábul
 Picked chiefs in numbers to apologize."

Then Rustam answered him: "That is the way.
 Against Kábul I need no host of men,
 Zawára with a hundred cavalry
 And infantry of name will do for me."

§ 3

*How the King of Kábul dug Pits in the Hunting-ground
 and how Rustam and Zawára fell therein*

Now when ill-starred Shaghád had left Kábul
 The monarch hurried to the hunting-ground,
 And took a hundred sappers, men of note
 Among the troops. They honeycombed the chase
 With pits, arranging them beneath the rides,
 And in them set haft-downward hunting-spears,

Swords, double-headed darts, and scimitars,
And made a shift to mask the openings
That neither man nor eye of beast might see them.

When Rustam had set forward in all haste
Shaghád dispatched a rapid post to say.—
“The elephantine hero hath come forth
Without an army. Come to him and ask
To be forgiven.”

V. 1736

The monarch of Kábul,
Pleas on his tongue and poison in his soul,
Came from the city and, on seeing Rustam,
Alighted from his steed, advanced a-foot,
Took off the Indian turban that he wore,
And clasped his naked head between his hands,
Drew off his boots and in his deep abasement
Made his eyelashes drip with his heart's blood.
He laid his cheeks upon the dusty ground,
Excusing his behaviour to Shaghád,
And saying: “If thy slave was drunk or crazy,
And seemed rebellious in his senselessness,
Vouchsafe to pardon this offence of mine,
And let me be anew as once I was.”

Bare-footed, dust on head, his heart all guile,
He went before the chief, who pardoned him
His fault, increased his standing, bade him cover
His head and feet, mount saddle, and proceed.

There was hard by the city of Kábul
A pleasant, fertile spot with wood and water,
And there they willingly encamped. The king
Provided provand lavishly and furnished
A pleasant banquet-house, brought wine, called minstrels,
And placed the chiefs on royal thrones. Thereafter
He spake to Rustam thus “When thou wouldst hunt
I have a district where on plain and hill
Game throngeth. Wild sheep, onager, gazelle
Fill all the waste. One with a speedy steed

Will capture there gazelle and onager ,
One should not overlook that pleasant place "

Now Rustam grew excited at his talk
Of watered plain, of onager, and game,
For, when one's fate approacheth, anything
Will lead the heart wrong and pervert the mind.

V. 1737

This whirling world of ours behaveth thus,
And will not make its secrets known to us.
The crocodile in water, pard on land,
And battle-braving Lion deft of hand,
Are in death's clutch no less than ant and fly;
To tarry here transcendeth subtlety.

He bade to saddle the steeds and fill the waste
With hawks and falcons, cased his royal bow,
And rode out to the plain, he and Shaghád.
Zawára too was of the company,
And many another of their noble friends.
The retinue were scattered in the chase,
But all to quarters where no pits were digged,
While Rustam and Zawára took the path
Among the pits because Fate willed it so.
Rakhsh sniffed fresh earth, spun like a ball, and shied,
Suspicious of the smell, and tore the ground
To pieces with his iron shoes. Howbeit
That fleet steed picked his steps right warily
So as to make his way between two pits ,
But Rustam's heart was filled with wrath at Rakhsh,
And fortune veiled discretion from his eyes
He raised his hunting-whip and in his dudgeon
Lashed Rakhsh though lightly and thus flurried him
Just as, environed by the pits, he sought
To 'scape Fate's clutch Two of his feet went through .
He had no purchase, all below was spear
And sword, no pluck availed, escape was none ;
And so the haunches of the mighty Rakhsh,
And Rustam's legs and bosom, were impaled ;

Yet in his manhood he uplifted him,
And from the bottom bravely gained the brim

§ 4

How Rustam slew Shaghád and died

When Rustam wounded as he was looked forth,
And saw the hostile visage of Shaghád,
He recognised the author of the plot,
And that the traitor was his foe, and said.—
“O man of black and evil destiny!
Thine action hath laid waste a prosperous land;
But thou shalt yet repent thee of this thing,
Writhe for this wrong, and never see old age.”

V. 1738

The vile Shaghád replied: “The wheel of heaven
Hath dealt with thee aright. For what a while
Hast thou engaged in bloodshed, strife, and pillage
On all sides! Now thy life shall end, and thou
Shalt perish in the toils of Áhriman.”

With that the monarch of Kábul came up
Upon his way toward the chase, behold
The elephantine warrior thus wounded,
With all his wounds unbound, and said to him:—
“O thou illustrious leader of the host!
What hath befallen thee on the hunting-field?
I will depart forthwith, bring hither leeches,
And weep in tears of blood on thine account,
No need to weep though if thou art made whole.”

But matchless Rustam answered: “Crafty villain!
The time for leech is passed Weep no blood-drops
For me. Though thou liv'st long the end will come,
None can evade the sky. My Grace divine
Surpasseth not Jamshíd's, and he was sawn
Asunder by a foe,¹ or Farídún's,

¹ Vol. 1. p. 140.

Or Kai Kubád's—those mighty, high-born Sháhs—
And when had come the time of Siyáwush
Gurwí, the son of Zira, cut his throat.¹

Kings of Írán and Lions in the fight
Were they, and they have gone. We have outstayed
them,

And loitered like great lions on our way ;
But Farámarz my son—mine Eye—will come
And will require my vengeance at thy hands."

He said to foul Shaghád : " Since such an ill
Hath come on me uncase my bow for me,
And let it serve as mine interpreter.
String it and lay it by me with two arrows.
It is not fit that lions on the prowl,
And coming on the plain in quest of quarry,
Shall see me fallen here and sorely wounded,
For evil will betide me, and my bow
Will stay their rending me alive. My time
Is come, I lay my body in the dust."

Shaghád drew near, uncased the bow, and strung it.
He drew it once, then laid it down by Rustam,
And laughed exulting at his brother's death.
The matchless hero clutched it lustily,
Though tortured by the anguish of his wounds,
What while Shaghád in terror at those arrows
Made haste to shield himself behind a tree—
An ancient plane still boughed and leaved but hollow—
And there behind it skulked the miscreant.
When Rustam saw this he put forth his hands,
Sore wounded as he was, and loosed a shaft.
He pinned his brother and the tree together,
And gladdened in the article of death.
Shaghád, when he was stricken, cried out " Ah !"
But Rustam had not left him time to suffer,
And cried : " Now God be praised, and I have known Him

¹ Vol. ii 321

Through all my years, that even when my soul
Hath reached my lips day hath not turned to night
O'er my revenge, but He hath given me strength
Before my death to wreak me on this traitor."

He spake, his soul departed from his body,
And all the folk bewailed him bitterly.
Within another pit Zawára died,
Remained no horseman high or low, beside?

V. 1740

§ 5

*How Zál received News of the Slaying of Rustam and
Zawára, and how Farámurz brought their Coffins and set
them in the Charnel-house*

One of those noble cavaliers escaped,
And made his way on horseback and a-foot.
When he had reached Zábulistán he said: —
"The mighty Elephant is with the dust,
So are Zawára and the escort too,
And not another horseman hath escaped!"

Rose from Zábulistán a cry against
The foe and monarch of Kábulistán,
Zál scattered dust upon his shoulders, tore
His breast and face, and cried: "Alas! alas!
Thou elephantine hero! would that I
Were in my winding-sheet! Zawára too,
That noble warrior, that valiant Dragon,
That famous Lion! Luckless, cursed Shaghád
Hath dug up by the roots that royal Tree.
Who could imagine that a wretched Fox
Would meditate revenge in yonder land
Upon a Lion? Who can call to mind
Such a misfortune, who could bear to hear
From his instructor that a Lion like Rustam
Had died in dust and through a Fox's words?

Why died I not before them wretchedly ?

Why am I left as their memorial ?

V. 1741

Why need I life and fame now that the seed

Of me, the son of Sám, hath been uprooted ?

O chieftain ! lion-taker ! hero ! lord !

O man of valour and world-conqueror !”

He sent an army under Farámarz

Against the monarch of Kábul forthwith,

To gather those slain bodies from the dust,

And give the world good cause for sorrowing.

When Farámarz arrived before Kábul

He found no man of name within the city.

They all had fled, the people were in tears,

And seared with grief for world-subduing Rustam.

Then Farámarz went to the hunting-ground—

The plain wherein the pitfalls had been dug.

He ordered that a stretcher should be brought,

And to lay out thereon that noble Trec,

Unloosed that belt which marked a paladin,

And stripped the body of its royal raiment.

Then first of all they laved in tepid water

The bosom, neck, and beard right tenderly,

Burned musk and ambergris before the corpse,

And sewed up all the gashes of its wounds,

Poured o’er the head rose-water and disposed

The purest camphor over all the form.

Then, when they had arrayed it in brocade,

They requisitioned roses, musk, and wine.

The man who sewed the shroud shed tears of blood

On combing out that beard of camphor hue.

Two stretchers scarce sufficed to hold the body ;

Was it a man’s trunk or a shady tree’s ?

V. 1742

They fashioned out of teak a goodly coffin

With golden nails and ivory ornaments.

The apertures were all sealed up with pitch,

Which they o’erlaid with musk and spicery.

They drew Zawára's body from the pit,
 Washed it, sewed up the gashes that they found,
 And placed it in a shroud made of brocade.

They sought about to find an elmtree-trunk,
 And skilful carpenters went forth and cut
 Some mighty planks therefrom. They drew the body
 Of Rakhsh out of the pit—that steed whose like
 None had beheld on earth—a two days' task,
 And then they hoised it on an elephant.

Kábulistán up to Zábulistán

Was like a place of public lamentation,
 And men and women stood there in such throngs
 That none had room to move, and so they passed
 The coffins on from hand to hand and thought,
 Such were their multitudes, the travail wind.
 They reached Zábul in two days and a night,
 And neither bier was seen to touch the ground.

The death of Rustam filled the age with wailing,
 Thou wouldst have said: "The very waste is moved!"

They made the charnel-house within a garden,
 And raised the summit of it to the clouds.

They set two golden thrones there face to face,
 It was the blessèd hero's place of rest.

Then all of those who were his servitors,

The free by birth and honest-hearted slaves,

When they had mingled musk and roses poured
 them

Out at the elephantine hero's feet,

And every one exclaimed: "O famous man!

Why need'st thou gifts of musk and ambergris?

Thou hast no part in sovereignty and feast,

No longer toilest in the battle-tide,

No longer lavishest thy gold and treasure.

In sooth such things are worthless in thy sight.

Be happy now in jocund Paradise,

For God compacted thee of manliness

And justice."

Having closed the charnel's door
They left him there. That famed, exalted Lion
Had passed away. Beside the door they made
A tomb for Rakhsh as of a horse upstanding.

What wouldst thou with this Wayside Inn—this gain
Of treasure first but in the end of pain?
Serve God or Áhriman yet still thou must,
Though made of iron, crumble into dust,
Yet lean to good while here thou shalt abide,
Elsewhere perchance thou wilt be satisfied.

•
§ 6

*How Farámarz led an Army to avenge Rustam and
slew the King of Kábul*

When Farámarz had made an end of mourning
He led his whole host onward to the plains,
And having opened Rustam's dwelling-place
Provided pay and outfit for the troops.
At dawn the noise of clarions arose,
Of kettledrums withal and Indian bells.
Kábul-ward from Zábul he led a host
That veiled the sun. The ruler of Kábul
Heard of those chieftains of Zábulistán,
And massed his scattered troops. The earth grew iron,
Air azure-dim. He marched 'gainst Farámarz,
And light departed from the sun and moon.
When those two hosts confronted, and the world
Rang with the shouting of the warriors,
Within the woods the lions lost their way
Frayed by the throng of steeds, the dust of troops.
A wind arose, the azure dust-clouds whirled,
And earth seemed one with heaven. Farámarz
Came forth and charged the centre of the foe,
The world was darkened by the horsemen's dust,

The monarch of Kábul was taken captive,
And all his mighty armament dispersed.
The warriors of Zábulistán like wolves
Attacked the enemy on every side,
Pursuing those that fled away, and slaying
So many warriors and haughty chiefs
Of Sind and Hind, that all the field turned mire,
And all the troops of Hind and Sind were scattered
They gave up land and home, abandoning
Both wife and child. The monarch of Kábul,
All bathed in blood, was flung within the tower
Upon an elephant, and Farámarz
Led on his army to the hunting-ground
Whereon the pits were dug. He bare with him
The foe in chains and two score more withal—
Kin to the king and idol-worshippers.
He tore the monarch's back to strips until
The bones showed bare, then hung him, foul with dust,
His mouth all blood, head-downward in a pit,
And burned his forty kin; then sought Shaghád,
There made a conflagration mountain-high,
And burned him with the plane¹ and ground beneath.
The troops returning to Zábulistán
Took all the ashes of Kábul to Zál.

When Farámarz had cut the tyrant off
He made a Zábulí king in Kábul,
Where no one of the royal stock remained
That had not read the patent of his sword.
He came back from Kábul all seared and smarting
The brightness of his days was overcast.

Zábulistán and Bust lamented loudly,
And no one wore a robe unrent. The folk
All came to welcome Farámarz again
With bosoms lacerate and full of pain.

V 1745

¹ See p 272

§ 7

How Rúdába lost her Wits through Mourning for Rustam

For one year there was mourning in Sístán,
And all the folk were clad in black and blue.
Upon a day Rúdába said to Zál.—

“Lament and wail because of Rustam’s death,
For surely since the sun hath lit the world
No man hath seen a darker day than this.”

“O foolish woman!” Zál replied to her,
“The pain of fasting passeth that of grief.”

Rúdába was enraged and swore an oath:—
“Henceforth my body shall not sleep or eat.
It may be that my soul will see again
The soul of Rustam midst yon company.”

She fasted for a week that she might hold
Communion with his soul. Her eye grew dim
Through abstinence, her noble body pined.
For fear of harm slaves followed her about.
Ere that week ended she had lost her wits,
And in her frenzy sorrow turned to feasting.
She went forth to the kitchen in the night,
And saw a serpent lying dead in water.
With trembling eagerness she seized its head,
And was about to eat. The attendants snatched it,
And clasping her withdrew her from that place
Of unclean hands, bare her to her apartments,
And, having set her in her wonted seat,
Brought forth a trencher and set food thereon.
She ate of all till she was satisfied,
And then they spread soft garments under her.
She slept and rested from her care and trouble,
From grief at death and sorrows of possession.
As soon as she awoke she asked for food,
And they provided her abundantly.

When sense returned to her she said to Zál :—
 “That word of thine consorted well with wisdom ;
 Grief at a death and feast and festival
 Are one to him that eateth not nor sleepeth.
 Our son hath gone and we shall follow him.
 Trust we the Maker’s justice.”

She bestowed
 Her treasures on the poor, and prayed to God :—
 “O Thou who art above both name and place !
 Cleanse from all fault the soul of matchless Rustam,
 Assign him Paradise for his abode,
 And joyance of the fruits that here he sowed.”

§ 8

How Gushtásp gave the Kingdom to Bahman and died

Since matchless Rustam’s life hath ceased to be
 I will present another history.

When fortune’s face grew louring to Gushtásp
 He called Jámásp before the throne, and said :—
 “Time hath inspired in me so much remorse
 About the matter of Asfandiyár
 That all my days are passed unjoyously,
 And I am troubled by the vengeful stars.
 Now after me Bahman will be the Sháh,
 With Bishútan as confidant. Reject not
 Bahman’s behests, but serve him loyally,
 And be his guide in every circumstance,
 For he is worthy of the crown and throne ”

The Sháh then gave Bahman the treasury-key,
 And, sighing deeply, said : “My work is over ;
 The floods have overtopped me. I have sat
 As Sháh for six score years and never seen
 My peer ; and now do thou bestir thyself,
 Be just to every one and, being just,

Exempt from grief. Make glad and keep the wise
Near thee, but make the world dark to thy foes,
And follow right for that ne'er causeth loss.

V. 1747

I who have undergone much pain and travail
Resign to thee throne, diadem, and treasure."

He spake, his lifetime ended, and his past
Bare¹ no more fruit. They made a charnel-house
Of ebony and ivory, and hung
His crown above his throne. He had his share
Of treasure and of toil, and, after joying
In sweet and antidote, found bane at last.

If such is life whence do its pleasures spring?²
Death equaleth the beggar and the king.
Enjoy thy having, shun ill-enterprise,
And hearken to the sayings of the wise.
My fellow-travellers have gone while I
Remain and tell at large of days gone by.
Each traveller hath reached his place of rest,
And, if he sought the good, achieved his quest.
Let virtue, virtue only, grasp thy hand
That thou mayst list to those that understand.
The doings of Bahman I now essay,
And will recount thee things long passed away.

¹ Reading with P.

XVI

BAHMAN, SON OF ASFANDIYÁR

HE REIGNED NINETY-NINE YEARS

ARGUMENT

Bahman, on ascending the throne, announces his purpose of taking vengeance on the family of Rustam for the death of Asfandiyár. He marches against Zábulistán, takes Zál and Farúmarz prisoners, pardons the former but executes the latter. He then returns home, marries his own daughter Humái, arranges the succession to the throne, and dies

NOTE

Originally Bahman appears to have had no connexion with the historical Artaxerxes Longimanus (B.C. 464-424), with whom he has been identified by various writers. Artaxerxes, however, was a familiar name in its Persian form in Sásánian times owing to the fact that another Artaxerxes had overthrown the Parthian, and founded a native Íránian, dynasty. The compilers of the *Bástán-náma*, who seem to have become acquainted through some Syriac writer, who drew his material from a Greek chronographer, with the first Artaxerxes, readily identified him with Bahman¹—the only traditional Íránian ruler available. Luhrásp and Gush-tásp on one side, and Dáráb and Dárá on the other, were alike out of the question, while Humái was a woman. Accordingly Bahman received the name and distinguishing title of the Achæmenid, and became known as Ardshír—a form of Artaxerxes—and as Dirúzdest—a translation of the Greek *Μακρόχειρ*. The expression “of the long hand” or “the long handed” is well illustrated by a passage in Tennyson’s “Princess.”

“But my good father thought a king a king;
He cared not for the affection of the house,

¹ NIN, § 12.

He held his sceptre like a pedant's wand
 To lash offence, and with long arms and hands
 Reach'd out, and picked offenders from the mass
 For judgment "

In time, as so often happens, the metaphor was taken literally, and we find Firdausí saying of Bahman :—

" And with his fingers dressed beside his legs
 His fists extended lower than his knees." ¹

How Artaxerxes obtained his title expressive of far-reaching power does not seem to be known. He may have assumed it himself, or received it from his subjects or from the Greeks. The earliest mention of it is by the Greek writer Dinon, or Damon,² in the days of Alexander the Great. The view which identifies Bahman with Artaxerxes Longimanus has been supplemented by the further identification of Artabanus with Rustam and Xerxes with Asfandiyár.³ If this is accepted we may trace in the contention of Rustam with Asfandiyár, the former's patronage of Bahman, Bahman's accession to the throne and his subsequent vengeance on the race of Zál, a poetical version of the palace conspiracy whereby Artabanus, the captain of the guard, leagued with Artaxerxes, slew the latter's father Xerxes, and placod Artaxerxes on the throne only to be destroyed himself shortly afterward with all his house by the Sháh whom he had set up. If, however, the view expressed at the beginning of this note is correct, and it is substantially Professor Noldeke's, that the title of the Long-handed was derived through the Syriac from Greek sources and bestowed on a wholly mythical personality, we may conclude that other events of the reign of the Long-handed were borrowed from the same foreign source and reflected back in the like manner, in which case of course the above identifications are historically valueless. In the translation we always speak of Bahman, not Ardshír.

§ 5 We have here one of the fictitious genealogies by which it was striven to connect the Sásánian with the Kaúnian dynasty. Another will be found in the next volume in the portion dealing with the Ashkánian dynasty.⁴

¹ p. 259.

² NIN, § 12, note

³ See MHP, 1 528 seq. Cf too JZ, 133, 160.

⁴ See too Vol 11 p. 3.

§ 1

*How Bahman sought Revenge for the Death of
Asfandiyár*

V. 1748

Whenas Bahman sat on his grandsire's throne
 He girt his girdle round him, oped his hands,
 Bestowed a donative upon the troops,
 And granted many a march and many a province.
 He held a conclave of the men of wisdom,
 The great men, and the officers of state,
 And thus he said: "Ye all, both old and young,
 Whoever hath an understanding mind,
 Wot of the slaying of Asfandiyár,
 Of fortune's changes both for good and ill,
 Of Rustam's deeds while yet he lived and those
 Of Zál, the sorcerer, that ancient man.
 Now Farámarz in public and in private
 Desireth naught but vengeance on ourselves,
 While my head acheth and my heart is full,
 And I too think of nothing but revenge:
 Two warriors—Núsh Ázar and Mihr-i-Núsh—
 Have given up their lives so wretchedly¹
 By that same token too Asfandiyár—
 A man without a peer in all the world—
 Was slaughtered in Zábulistán. The beasts
 Of prey and chase went wild with grief for him.
 Yea, for the slaughter of Asfandiyár
 The pictures in the palace weep for woe,
 And for the blood of those our noble ones,
 Our youths and gallant cavaliers withal.
 No man that springeth from pure stock will leave
 His finest jewel lying in the ditch,
 But will come forward, like Sháh Farídún
 (And while such men exist all will be well)

V. 1749

¹ See pp. 226, 227.

Who made Zakhák, in that he slew Jamshíd,
 To cease among the warriors of the world
 For vengeance Minúchíhr led from Ámul
 A mighty host 'gainst Túr and valiant Salm,
 Invaded Chín, took vengeance for his grandsire,
 And levelled earth up to the hills with¹ slain.
 When Kai Khusrau escaped Afrásiyáb
 He made the world run river-like with blood.
 My sire avenged the slaying of Luhrásp,
 And like achievements should be told of me.
 In vengeance for his father, Farámarz
 Exalted to the shining sun his head,
 Marched on Kábul, required revenge for Rustam,
 And levelled to the dust its fields and fells.
 No man could recognise the land for blood :
 They made the horses trample on the slain.
 More call have I to take revenge who urge
 My steed against the elephant and lion,
 Because thou wilt not see amongst earth's heroes
 Another horseman like Asfandiyár.
 What are your views ? What answer do ye give
 In this regard ? Strive to advise me well."

Thereat the assembled loyal lieges cried :—
 "Thy slaves are we and have fulfilled our hearts
 With love toward thee. Thou art more instructed
 Than we about the past and mightier.
 Do whatso'er thou wilt so long as fame
 And Grace divine accrue to thee thereby.
 No one will disobey thee ; who will dare ?"

V. 1750

Bahman, thus answered by his host, grew keener
 For vengeance and made ready to invade
 Sístán. This settled, the assembly rose.
 At dawn the drums beat and the sky grew ebon
 With dust of troops whereof there marched along
 Sword-wielding horsemen five score thousand strong.

¹ Vol. i. p. 215 *seq.*

§ 2

How Bahman put Zál in Bonds

Now when Bahman was drawing nigh the Hírmund
 He choose him out an envoy, one of rank,
 Entrusted to him various messages,
 And sent him on to Zál, the son of Sám,
 To say: "My lot is bitter in the world
 Through what hath happened to Asfandiyár,
 And through the vengeance owing for Núsh Zád¹
 And Núsh Ázar—two loved and high-born princes.
 I mean to ease my heart of this old grudge,
 And make the rivers of Zábul run blood."

The messenger arrived and gave the message
 To Zál, whose heart grew wed to pain and grief,
 And he returned this answer: "If the Sháh
 Is thus concerned about Asfandiyár,
 Then let him know that what was was to be,
 And that the matter filled my heart with anguish.
 Thou wast thyself exposed to good and ill,
 And hadst from me all profit and no loss.
 Now Rustam swerved not from thy sire's commands,
 But, as thou sawest, bare a loyal heart.
 Thy sire, that great and noble prince, was fey,
 And thereupon waxed over-bold. The lion
 And dragon of the wood can not escape
 The clutch of Fate. Thou must have heard, good sooth,
 What deeds of valour Sám, the cavalier,
 Accomplished in the past, and thus persèvered
 Down to the days of Rustam, who then drew
 The trenchant scimitar and wrought with valour
 Before thine ancestors in times of strife.²
 Withal he was the humblest of thy nurses
 As well as of the mightiest of thy host.

V. 1751

¹ Núsh Zád seems to be variant of Mihr-i-Núsh. ² Reading with P.

Now miserably hath he passed away,
 And all Zábulistán is full of tumult.
 If now thou wilt forbear to war with us,
 Wilt think upon our case considerately,
 Wilt come and, putting vengeance from thy heart,
 Enchant our land with lovingkindliness,
 I will present to thee upon thy coming
 Sám's wealth, brocade, dínárs, his golden girdles,
 And golden harness, for thou art the Sháh;
 The nobles are thy flock."

He gave the envoy
 A steed, dínárs, and many other gifts.
 Now when the noble envoy reached Bahman,
 He told what he had heard and seen with Zál.
 Bahman, the fortune-favoured, when he heard,
 Rejected the excuse, was very wroth,
 And reached the city with an aching heart,
 With vengeful thoughts and sighs upon his lips.
 Then Zál, the son of Sám the cavalier,
 Attended meanly by two horsemen, went
 To meet Bahman and, coming to the presence,
 Alighted from his roadster, did obeisance,
 And spake thus, saying: "Wise and prudent Sháh!
 Deign to regard us with the eye of wisdom.
 By all the services that we have paid,
 And by our care for thee when thou wast young,
 Forgive us, speak no more about the past,
 Be great and seek not vengeance for the slain."

Enraged with Zál, whose hopes were foiled, Bahman
 Put him forthwith in fetters, heeding not
 What minister or treasurer might say.
 Then from the halls of Zál, the son of Sám
 The cavalier, they loaded up the camels
 With money and with jewels in the rough,
 With thrones and tapestries, whate'er there was,
 With golden tissue and with golden crowns,

With silvern tissue and with belts and earrings.
They took the Arab horses trapped with gold,
The Indian scimitars with golden sheaths,
The prisoners and sacks of drachms, of musk,
And camphor, and the treasures more or less
That Rustam had collected by his toil
From Sháhs and chiefs. Bahman delivered all
Zábulistán to pillaging and then
Gave crowns and purses to his mighty men.

§ 3

How Farámarz fought with Bahman and was put to Death

At Bust, upon the frontier, Farámarz,
In dudgeon for his grandsire, steeped his hands
In vengeance, gathered troops, marched 'gainst Bahman,
And oft recalled the wars of matchless Rustam.
When news of this had reached the monarch's ears
He raged upon the throne of king of kings,
Packed up the baggage, called the troops to horse,
Marched to the burial-place of Rustam's race,
And tarried there two weeks. Then with the din
Of trumpets and of Indian bells the mountains
Shook to their cores, heaven bathed the world in pitch,
And from that pitch the arrows showered like hail,
While at the clash of ax and twang of bow
The earth out-quaked the sky. Three days and nights
Upon that field steel swords and maces rained,
And clouds of dust collected overhead.
Upon the fourth day there arose a storm :
Thou wouldst have said : " The day and night are one."
The blast was in the face of Farámarz.
The world-lord joyed and, following up the dust
With trenchant sword, brought Doomsday on the foe.
The men of Bust, the warriors of Zábul,
The gallant swordsmen of Kábulistán,

Had not a horseman left upon the field,
 No chief was left of all those men of name,
 For one by one they turned their backs in flight,
 And shamefully deserted Farámarz.
 The battlefield was heaped up mountain-like
 By slain struck down pell mell from both the hosts.
 Albeit with a paltry band of heroes
 Right bravely Farámarz still faced the foe,
 Himself a lion and a lion's whelp,
 With all his body hacked by scimitars,
 Until at length that noble warrior
 Was ta'en by brave Ardshír who carried him
 Before Bahman. That vengeful monarch gazed
 Upon him for a while but would not spare,
 Bade rear a gibbet and hung Farámarz
 Alive thereon, his elephantine form
 Head-downward. Then in wreak, with arrow-rain,
 Bahman,¹ that famous Kaian, had him slain.

V. 1754

§ 4

How Bahman released Zál and returned to Irán²

Now noble Bishútan, the minister,
 Was sorely troubled by this butchery,
 And rising in the world-lord's presence said —
 "Just monarch ! if revengement was thy due,
 And 'twas thy heart's desire, that wish of thine
 Is perfected in loss. Cease to enjoin
 Raid, slaughter, turmoil, strife. Approve them not,
 Refrain thyself, fear God, and think of us.
 Consider well the turns of fortune's wheel,
 How it exalteth this man to the clouds,
 And putteth that man into sorry plight.
 Thy sire, that world-lord and the army's Lustre,
 Did he not go Nímruz-ward for a bier,

¹ Ardshír in the original. See p 282. ² Reading with C and P.

And did not Rustam too when at Kábul
 Go to the chase and perish in a pit ?
 While thou dost live, O king of pure descent !
 Vex not a man of birth, for if the son
 Of Sám, the son of Narímán, shall cry
 Against his bondage to the great All-giver,
 Thou wilt be pinched, successful as thou art,
 When he appealeth to the Omnipotent.
 To Rustam, warder of the Kaian throne,
 Who used to gird his loins for every toil,
 Thou wast indebted for this crown and not
 To Sháh Gushtásp or to Asfandiyár.
 Trace downward from the days of Kai Kubád
 To those of Kai Khusrau of holy rede,
 All owed their greatness to his scimitar,
 And held the mightiest his inferiors.
 If thou art wise release Zál from his bonds,
 And turn thy heart back from the evil way."

The Sháh repented of those deeds of his
 When he had heard the words of Bishútan
 A proclamation issued from his court :—
 "Ye paladins, ye just and upright men !
 Make preparations for returning home,
 And keep from pillage and from massacre."

V. 1755

He bade them to release the feet of Zál
 From bonds and give him much good counselling.
 They built a charnel-house to hold the slain,
 Such was the rede of righteous Bishútan.

When Zál returned from prison to his palace
 His noble spouse wept o'er him bitterly,
 And cried : " Alack thou brave, heroic Rustam,
 Thou scion of the hero Naríman !
 When yet thou wast alive who recognised
 Gushtásp as Sháh ? But now thy hoards are sacked,
 Zál hath been captive, and thy son slain vilely
 By showers of arrows ! Oh ! may none e'er see

Another day like this, and may the earth
 Be void of offspring from Asfandiyár.”
 Now tidings of this matter reached Bahman,
 As well as glorious Bishútán, who grieved
 For her, his cheeks grew wan at her complainings.
 He spake thus to Bahman: “O youthful Sháh,
 As ’twere a new moon in the midst of heaven!
 At daybreak lead thy host forth from this land,
 For matters here are grave and troublesome.
 May evil eyes be distant from thy crown,
 And may thy whole time be a festival.
 The king of kings should stay not long beneath
 The roof of Zál, the son of Sám the hero”

Whenas the hills became like sandarach,
 And when the sound of drums rose from the courtgate,
 The monarch led the army from Zábúl
 Toward Írán—the country of the brave.
 He rested, sat rejoicing on the throne,
 And ruled the world by precedent and justice.
 Great was the largess that the poor received,
 And many men rejoiced in him or grieved.

§ 5

*How Bahman married his own daughter Humái and
 appointed his Successor*

Bahman¹ possessed one lion-taking son,
 On whom he had bestowed the name Sásán,
 He had withal a daughter named Humái,
 Considerate, accomplished, and discreet.
 They used to call her by the name Chihrzád.²
 Her father’s greatest joy was seeing her.
 He took her for his wife, which in the Faith

¹ See p. 288, note.

² The name may mean “Born of the seed” or if=Chihr Ázád, “Of noble seed” or “Of noble men.”

That thou call'st olden was a goodly deed.
 Humái, that heart-refreshing shining Moon,
 In course of time grew pregnant by the Sháh.
 Now when six months had passed she 'gan to ail,
 And he, at seeing this, fell sick himself,
 And, prostrated with suffering, summoned her.
 He summoned too the nobles and the magnates,
 And, seating them where great men use to sit,
 Thus said. "This chaste Humái hath had small joy
 Of this world, and I leave her crown, high throne,
 The host, the treasure, and preeminence.
 She shall be my successor in the world,
 She and the babe withal that she shall bear,
 For, whether it shall prove a son or daughter,
 It shall succeed to crown and throne and girdle."

Sásán, on hearing this, was all astound :
 His heart was darkened by his father's words,
 And, like a pard, in three days and two nights
 He journeyed from Írán abroad in shame,
 And reached in haste the town of Nishápúr
 In dudgeon and an alien from his sire.
 He asked a lady of high rank in marriage,
 But kept himself down level with the dust,
 Withheld the secret of his Kaian birth,
 And spake to no one of his quality.
 His chaste wife bare to him a holy son,
 Whose steps were happy and whose birth was blest,
 A son to whom he gave the name Sásán,
 And died anon. Whenas the child grew up,
 And saw his home a prey to poverty,
 He tended for the king of Nishápúr
 The herds that roamed at will o'er plain and mountain,
 And was for long the herdsman of the king :
 His dwelling was on height and wilderness.

V. 1757

Now turn I to Humái to tell her case
 When she, Bahman deceased, assumed his place.

XVII

HUMÁI

SHE REIGNED THIRTY-TWO YEARS

ARGUMENT

Humái, in order to keep the throne for herself, casts away her son, when an infant, in an ark on the Euphrates. The babe is found by a launderer, adopted by him and his wife, and named Dáráb. Dáráb's kingly qualities early assert themselves, and, refusing to follow his foster-father's trade, he enters the Persian army. A portent calls the general's attention to him. He displays great valour in war against the Rúmans, and is recognised by Humái, who owns him as her son and resigns the throne in his favour.

NOTE

The goddess of love, worshipped in many lands and under many names, had one of her oldest seats at Ascalon.¹ Beside her dove-haunted temple was a lake, abounding in fish, to which at stated times the image of the goddess—a woman to the waist and a fish below—was borne in procession. Her local name was Derketo. The cult of the goddess gave rise to a legend that Derketo originally was a girl who, as the result of a love-affair with a Syrian youth, gave birth to a daughter whom she exposed to perish among rocks in a desert, threw herself into the lake, and was changed into a fish. Her abandoned babe was cared for and fed by the doves till about one year old, when it was found by the herdsmen of Simmas, the keeper of the flocks of Ninus, king of Assyria. Simmas, who was childless, brought up the babe as his own, and gave her the name of Semiramis. In after years Onnes, the viceroy of Syria under king Ninus and his chief counsellor, saw, fell in love with, and married her. She bore him two sons, Hyapatés and Hydaspés. Then Ninus himself became infatuated

¹ Herodotus, Book I c. 105.

with her, Onnes hung himself, and Semiramis became queen. By Ninus she had a son named Ninyas. When Ninus died he left her the throne. Her career as supreme ruler was magnificent rather than moral. She governed all Asia as far eastward as the Indus, and was the reputed builder of Babylon, its hanging gardens, and the temple of Bel. In fact all great achievements of building or engineering in those parts were attributed to her. After a reign of forty-two years, and at the age of sixty-two, she resigned the throne to her son Ninyas, and either made away with herself by suicide or else turned into a dove and flew off in company with a flock of those birds. Such in brief is a legend that was much in vogue in the days when Ktesias was court physician in Persia between the years B.C. 417 and B.C. 398. He recorded it in his *Persica*, Diodorus epitomised it in his *Bibliotheca*, Books I. and II., and through his epitome it has come down to us. The legend has been given here because it seems not unlikely that in Humái we have a reminiscence of Semiramis. The two legends certainly have much in common. We have two queens, both of whom, after the death of their husbands and by their express sanction, oust—to employ a convenient phrase—the rightful heir, both of them have a foundling story connected with them, and both in the end resign their thrones to their sons. Both too are represented in legend as having been great builders; Humái is credited, though not in the *Sháhnáma*, with the edifices whose ruins still exist in the neighbourhood of Istakhr (Persepolis) in Párs.¹ Moreover Mas'údí tells us that Humái's mother was a Jewess, *i.e.* a Syrian.² Two attempts seem to have been made to connect Humái with the old legendary line of kings, and both characteristically Persian. In one she is the daughter of Gushtásp and marries her brother Asfandiyár; in the other she is the daughter of Bahman and marries her father. The foundling legend is transferred from her to her son Dáráb. Several such legends are in existence. The oldest probably is that of Sargon I. of Agan, an ancient Babylonian king. "My mother," he says, "placed me in an ark of bulrushes: with bitumen my door she closed up: she threw me into the river,"³ which did not enter into the ark to me. The river carried me: to the dwelling of AKKI the water-carrier it brought me. AKKI the water-carrier in his goodness of heart lifted me up from the river. AKKI the water-carrier brought me up as his own son."⁴ Similarly Romulus and Remus, the twin sons of the Vestal Silvia, were set afloat on the

¹ ZT, I. 510, NT, p. 8 and note, MM, IV. 76

² MM, II. 123

³ The Euphrates.

⁴ RP, v. 3.

Tiber in a trough, and afterward brought up by a shepherd and his wife¹ There is too the case of Moses and of others.

Humái appears in the Zandavasta as "the holy Huma"² She is the earliest of the three queens or female Sháhs that, according to the partly legendary, partly historical, dynastic scheme of the Sháhnáma, ruled in ancient times over Írán. She is also by far the most important of the three. The other two—Púrándukht and Ázarmdukht—reigned in succession for six and four months respectively during part of the troublous period (A.D. 628-633) that intervened between the deposition of Khusrau Parwíz and the accession of Yazdagird III.

§ 1.

*How Humái cast away her son Dáráb on the River
Farút in an Ark*

v 1758 Bahman died of his malady and ceased
To be concerned about the crown and throne.
Humái came, set the crown upon her head,
And ordered things anew, admitted all
The army to her court and, opening
The portal of her treasures, gave dínárs.
In rede and justice she excelled her sire :
The whole world prospered through her equity.
She said : " Be this crown glorious, our foes' hearts
Uprooted, our profession every good,
And may none see distress and care through us.
I will enrich all mendicants and those
Who earn their own subsistence by their toil,
And harass not the great possessed of treasure."

Whenas the time of her delivery came
She kept it from the people and the host,
v. 1759 Because she loved the throne of sovereignty,
And found it profit to possess the world
She bare a son in secret, kept it close, .
And had the little Treasure hid away,
Procured for nurse a woman of free birth,

¹ Lavy, Book I. c. 4.

² DZA, ii 224.

Pure, full of modesty, and other virtues,
And privily made o'er to her the babe,
That Shoot so flourishing and full of promise,
And, when they asked Humái about her son,
She used to say · "The noble child is dead."

Moreover she assumed the royal crown,
And held the throne in triumph and in joy.
She sent her hosts where'er were hostile chiefs,
And was apprised of everything that passed
For good or evil in the world around.
She only sought for what was just and good,
And ordered all the world aright; her justice
Safeguarded it; it spake of her alone.
Thus eight months passed away, but when the boy
Began to favour the departed Sháh
She ordered that a skilful carpenter
Should choose material for fine joinery,
And make a goodly ark of seasoned wood.
They smeared it with a coat of pitch and musk,
And lined it softly with brocade of Rúm,
Bedaubing it without with lime and wax.
She placed within a pillow for a bed,
And filled it full of pearls of splendid water.
They poured in quantities of ruddy gold,
Mixed with cornelians and emeralds.
They bound one jewel, such as kings might wear,
Upon the arm of that unweanèd child
And, when the little one was fast asleep,
His nurse, so deft of hand, went wailingly,
Disposed him tenderly inside the ark,
Enwrapped him warmly in fine silk of Chín,
And then they made the cover water-tight
With lime, pitch, wax, and musk. When midnight came
They carried forth the ark, without a word,
And, hasting from Humái, set it adrift
Upon the stream of the Farát. Two men

Ran after it to notice how the suckling
 Fared on the stream. The ark went like a boat,
 And those that watched had to bestir themselves.
 Now when the morning rose above the mountains
 The ark brought up beside a watercourse,
 Where was a laundering-place, the workers there
 Had made with stones the channel's inlet narrow.
 A launderer beheld the little ark,
 Ran up, and drew it from the laundering-place.
 When he had oped the ark, and had removed
 The coverings, he stood in wonderment,
 Wrapped it in heaps of clothes and hurried off,
 All eager expectation and delight,
 Whereat a watcher ran to tell the mother
 Of ark and launderer. Said that shrewd queen :—
 "Thou must keep hidden that which thou hast seen "

§ 2

How the Launderer brought up Dúráb

Now when the launderer came back from the stream
 At that untimely hour his wife exclaimed :—
 "Is this thy husbandry to bring the clothes
 Half dried? Whoe'er will pay thee for such work?"
 The launderer, heart-withered then by grief
 Because his own bright little one was dead,
 For whom his wife was all disconsolate
 With lacerated cheeks and darkened soul,
 Replied: "Cheer up! Henceforth for thee to wail
 Will be but scurvy, for if my good wife
 Can keep a secret I will tell a thing:
 Upon the watercourse, against the stone
 Whereon I beat the clothes and rinse them out
 When I have finished cleaning them, I spied
 An ark, and hidden in it was a babe—

A little one that thou wilt love at sight
As soon as ever I uncover it.

'Tis true that we have had one of our own,
Though for a little while and he is dead,
But now thou hast one unawares—a son
All furnished with dínárs and jewelry!"

With that he set the clothes upon the ground,
And lifted up the cover of the ark.
The launderer's wife beheld and in her wonder
Exclaimed: "God bless it!" for she saw a cheek
Aglow amid the silk—Bahman's own image!
His pillow was all pearls of finest water,
With emeralds and cornelians for his footstool,
Upon his left hand there were red dínárs,
And on his right hand jewels in profusion.
The woman suckled him immediately,
Rejoicing over that entrancing babe,
Whose beauty and whose wealth consoled her heart.
The launderer said to her: "We must be ever
Prepared to give our lives up for this child,
Because he is the son of some great man,
May be a king himself."

The launderer's wife
Cared for the child as it had been her kin,
As it had been her very son indeed,
And on the third day named the babe Dáráb,
Because they found his cradle in the stream.¹

It happened that one day the careful wife
Was talking to her lord of many things,
And said to him: "How wilt thou use these gems?
Let wisdom be thy counsellor therein."

"Good wife!" the launderer answered, "hoarded jewels

¹ Dar áb=in water According to Tabarí (ZT. 1 509) Humái, hearing that her son had been found by a miller, sent for the latter, inquired about the babe, and said, "Dár," i. e. "Take him." Hence the form "Dárá." Both forms occur in the text, and both etymologies are of course worthless. The ancient form of the word was "Dárayahush."

And dust are one to me. 'Tis best for us
To quit this city, move out to the plains,
Relieved from straits and hardship, and reside
Within some city, where folk know us not,
Content and affluent."

At morn he packed,
Departed, and forgot those fields and fells.
They bore Dáráb with them and carried naught
Beside except the gold and jewelry.

V 1762 They journeyed from the place for three score leagues,
They made their home within another city,
And there within that alien city lived
Like wealthy folk. A famous magnate dwelt
Therein, and unto him the launderer sent
One of the jewels, taking in return
Apparel, gold, and silver. Thus he did
Until he had exchanged them nearly all,
And there remained one ruby in the house
Of what the ark had held for good or ill.
One day the wife, who was the manager,
Said to her master: "We need work no longer.
Since thou hast made thy fortune give up trade."

He answered her: "Good wife and guide! thou
speakest

Of trade. Well, what is better? Trade is ever
The first concern. Tend well Dáráb and mark
What time will yet produce for thee through him."

They cherished him so dearly that he felt
No ill from any blast. When heaven had wheeled
Above him for some years he grew to be
A youth of stature and of Grace divine,
And wrestled with his playmates in the street,
Where none could match him as to bulk and strength,
Yea, all combined against him and were worsted!
The launderer grumbled at these escapades,
Which made the outlook gloomy for the shop,

And said: "Now beat these clothes upon the stone;
 'Tis no disgrace to thee to learn a craft,"
 And when Dáráb, as usual, left the work,
 And ran away, the launderer used to weep
 In tears of blood and wasted nearly all
 His time in searching countryside and city,
 And coming on the boy with bow in hand,
 His breast extended and his thumbstall on,
 Would seize the bow and cry indignantly:—
 "O thou destructive and pugnacious Wolf!
 Why dost thou hanker after bow and arrows?
 Why art thou set on evil while so young?"

Thereat Dáráb would answer: "O my father!
 Thou turn'st the brightness of my life to gloom.
 Provide me first of all with men of lore,
 That I may get by heart the Zandavasta,
 And then command my toils for trade and stream,
 But do not yet require this drudgery."

V. 1763

The launderer, having often rated him,
 At last consigned him to the care of teachers.
 He learned accomplishments, grew masterful,
 And wholly past fault-finding and reproach.
 "My father," said he to his foster-sire,
 "This laundry business is not fit for me,
 Be not at all concerned on mine account,
 But bring me up to be a cavalier."

The launderer thereupon selected one
 Of good repute and skilled in horsemanship,
 And long committed to his charge the youth,
 Who learnt from him whate'er was requisite—
 The way to handle rein and lance and buckler,
 And wheel his charger on the battlefield,
 To play at polo, shoot with bow and arrow,
 And outwit foes, till he attained such might
 That leopards would not close with him in fight.

§ 3

*How Dáráb questioned the Launderer's Wife about his
Parentage, and how he fought against the Rúmáns*

One day Dáráb said to the launderer :—

“ Albeit that I never mention it
Affection stirreth not in me for thee,
Nor is my face like thine. I feel astounded
Whene’er thou call’st me son and seatest me
Beside thee in the shop.”

The launderer said :—

“ What words are these ? Alack for all the pains
Bestowed on thee ! If thou out-classest me
Seek for thy sire , thy mother hath thy secret.”

It happened that the launderer one day
Went from the house and hastened to the stream
Dáráb made fast the door and then approached
The goodwife, took in hand his scimitar,
And said to her : “ Attempt not to deceive me,
And to obscure the issue ; speak the truth
In answer to my questions. How am I
Related to you both and wherefore dwelling
Thus with a launderer ? ”

In fright the woman
Begged for her life and called on God for succour.
She said : “ Seek not my blood, and I will tell thee
All as thou biddest.”

She recounted all,
With neither reticence nor subterfuge,
About the ark, the infant yet unweaned,
About the golden coins and royal jewels,
And said : “ We were but simple working-folk
Quite unrelated to the quality.
What wealth we have is all derived from thine ;
Through thee we rose from low to high estate.

We are but slaves and thine is to command :
What wilt thou ? We are thine both soul and body."

Dáráb stood in amaze on hearing this,
Plunged in profound surmise. He said to her :—
"Doth anything remain of all that wealth,
Or hath the launderer spent the whole of it ?
Is there enough still left to buy a horse
In this our day of lowliness and want ?"

The woman said : "There is and more than that,
And there are money, land, and fruitful gardens."

She gave him all the money that she had,
And showed to him the precious uncut gem.
He spent the money on a noble steed,
A lasso, mace, and saddle of low price.

There was a prudent marchlord, one of weight,
A magnate well approved and well advised,
To whom Dáráb betook himself with soul
O'erclouded and perturbed. The marchlord held him
In highest estimation, no disaster
Befell him any whit.

Now as it chanced
An army marched from Rúm to levy war
Upon that prosperous land, that frontier-chief
Was slain in battle and his army worsted.
In those days when the tidings reached Humái :—
"The Rúman hath set foot upon our border,"
There lived a warrior hight Rashnawád—
A captain of the host and sprung from such.
She ordered : "Let him lead a host toward Rúm,
And waste the country with the scimitar."

V. 1765

To that end Rashnawád assembled troops,
Assigned the mustering place and gave out rations,
Dáráb heard, joyed, went, and enrolled his name.
When many troops had gathered, and the muster
Had been completed, glorious Humái,
Accompanied by well affected chiefs,

Came from the palace to review the host,
 To count the numbers, and go through the names
 Upon the registers. She tarried long
 On that broad plain while many troops marched past,
 And when she spied Dáráb, his Grace divine,
 His bearing, and the steel mace on his shoulder,
 When thou hadst said: "He filleth all the plain,
 And earth is subject to his prancing steed,"
 When too she marked his breast and lovesome face,
 The mother's milk stirred in her, and she asked.—
 "Whence is this cavalier who is possessed
 Of such great limbs and is so tall and straight?
 Me seemeth that he is a man of name,
 Discreet and yet a warlike cavalier,
 A gallant heart, illustrious and mighty,
 But his equipment is not worthy of him."

When narrowly she had surveyed Dáráb,
 And had approved of all that host, she chose
 A favourable season by the stars
 Upon the captain of the host's behalf,
 As was the fitting course. What time the leaders
 Were of one mind they led the army forth
 And left Humái. She sent out watchful spies
 To keep her well informed and certified
 About the army's case for good and ill,
 And cut short all surmises of mishaps.
 Thus stage by stage the army marched on Rúm;
 Its flying dust-clouds filled the heavens with gloom.

V. 1766

§ 4

How Rashnawád learned the Case of Dáráb

It happened that one day a mighty tempest,
 With thunderings and lightnings, rain and turmoil,
 Brake o'er the host and troubled Rashnawád;
 The earth was flooded and the welkin roared;

Men everywhere were fleeing from the downpour,
 And making for some shelter on the waste.
 Dáráb, like others, was discomfited,
 And sought to escape the storm. He looked around,
 Beheld a heap of ruins, and observed
 A lofty vault, though old and ruinous,
 One that had borne the brunt of wind and weather,
 Still standing in their midst. He slept perforce
 Therein for he was all alone and friendless.
 The general was going on his rounds,
 And passing by the vault, when from the waste
 A voice fell on his ear and made him quail
 For his own life; it was a voice that said :—
 “O ruined vault ! be very circumspect !
 Be careful of the monarch of Írán.
 He had not any shelter, friend, or mate,
 And so he came and slumbered under thee.”

Thought Rashnawád : “’Tis thunder on the blast.”
 Then from the desert came the voice again :
 “O vault !” it said, “close not the eye of wisdom,
 For ’neath thee is the son of Sháh Bahman.
 Fear not the rain and keep these words in mind.”

A third time that same voice came to his ear ;
 His heart was strangely straitened at the sound.
 He asked a counsellor : “What thing is this ?
 Some one must needs go thither. Ascertain
 Who is reposing there in such concern
 About himself.”

V. 1767

They went and saw a youth
 Of prudent aspect and heroic mien,
 His charger and his garments wet and worn,
 And he was couching on the darksome dust.
 They told the general, whose heart was stirred,
 And he commanded : “Summon him forthwith,
 And make him hear.”

They cried : “Awake, thou sleeper !

Arouse thee from thy slumber on the dust."

He mounted, and at once the vault fell in!
The leader of the army of the Sháh,
On witnessing a portent such as that,
And having scanned Dáráb from head to foot,
Went with him quickly to the camp-enclosure,
Exclaiming: "O just Judge, the only God!
None hath beheld this wonder heretofore,
Or heard of such from the experienced chiefs."

Then garments were supplied at his behest,
And a pavilion got in readiness.

They made a fire huge as a hill and burned
Much aloe-wood and musk and ambergris.

Whenas the sun rose o'er the mountain-tops
The general made all ready for the march
He bade an archimage—his chief adviser—
To bring a change of raiment, Arab steed
With golden trappings, mail, and gold-sheathed sword.
These he presented to Dáráb, and asked:
"O lion-hearted man and warrior!

Who art thou? Of what country and what race?
'Twere well that thou shouldst tell me all the truth."

Dáráb, on hearing this, narrated all,
Disclosing every secret of his past;
Just as the goodwife had acquainted him,
So told he everything to Rashnawád,
About the ark, the ruby on his arm,
The money and brocade that lay beside him,
And of his rest and slumber in the vault.
Then Rashnawád dispatched a man forthwith,
And to that messenger he said: "Bring hither,
As swift as wind, both Mars and Venus, bring
The launderer, his wife, and signet-ring."

§ 5

How Dáráb fought against the Host of Rúm

This said, he broke up camp and marched on Rúm.
 He made Dáráb the leader of the scouts,
 And issued to them lances tipped with steel.
 The scouts drew near to Rúm, and from that side
 The warden of those marches came to meet them.
 All unawares they countered. Battle's dust
 Arose forthwith. They mixed in fight and shed
 Blood like a river. When Dáráb beheld
 That warrior-host he came like flying dust,
 And slew so many of the troops of Rúm
 That thou hadst said: "The world hath grasped its
 sword."

He went forth like a lion, under him
 A Dragon, in his hand a Crocodile.
 Thus fared he till he reached the Rúmans' camp,
 And rushed upon it like an angry lion.
 Earth seemed a sea of Rúman blood; wherever
 His falchion led him went the atheling.
 Returning from his triumph o'er the Rúmans
 He came to Rashnawád, the noble leader,
 And had from him much praise: "May our Sháh's host
 Ne'er lack thee. When we quit the land of Rúm,
 And when the host is home, thou shalt receive
 Such favours from the Sháh that thou wilt be
 The richer both by treasure and a crown."

They spent the night in ordering the troops,
 And furbishing the weapons of the horsemen,
 Then as the sun rose o'er the gloomy dales,
 And earth became as 'twere a lamp agleam,
 The two opposing armies met again,
 And darkened with their dust the rising sun;
 But when Dáráb advancing led the charge,

V 1769

And gave his fleet steed rein, there tarried not
 A single man before the Rúman lines,
 While of the warrior-swordsmen few survived.
 He came upon the centre like a wolf,
 And scattered utterly that great array.
 Assailing then the right wing of the foe
 He carried off abundant arms and spoil,
 And cut in pieces all the troops of Rúm :
 None of their champions seemed himself at all !
 The warriors of Írán came with a rush,
 Like lions, in his wake right valiantly,
 And slew so many of the Rúman host
 That all the field was puddled into clay.
 Dáráb slew forty of the Christian prelates¹
 Among the magnates and bare off the Cross²
 At those great deeds the heart of Rashnawád,
 The paladin, swelled with delight. He blessed
 And greatly praised Dáráb, and favoured him
 The more while blessing him Night came, the world
 Grew pitch-like, and the host returned from fight.
 The general rested in the Rúmans' camp,
 And loosed the girdle from his loins. He spent
 The night apportioning the ample spoil,
 And all the army was enriched thereby.
 He sent Dáráb a messenger to say —
 " O man of lion-heart and good at need !
 Consider now what thou wilt please to take,
 And of this spoil what is of use to thee ·
 Whatever doth not please thee give away ,
 Thou art more glorious than the lord of Rakhsh.

Dáráb, on seeing this, was well content,

¹ See Vol. i. pp. 373, 378.

² No doubt the *Labarum* of the army is meant. The *true* Cross was taken at the capture of Jerusalem by Khusrau Parwíz (Chosroes II.), A.D. 614, and carried off to Persia, whence it was recovered by Heraclius on the conclusion of peace in A.D. 628. BGDF, ii. 300, v.

And for form's sake retained a spear himself,
 Dispatching all the rest to Rashnawád,
 And said: "Mayst thou be conquering and happy."

V. 1770

Whenas the sun's orb left the darksome west
 The sky donned black brocade and when one watch
 Had passed, and all the sentinels were set,
 Their challenges ascended in a roar
 As 'twere of lions loose.

Now when the sun
 Took up its golden shield, and when the troops
 Awoke, the warriors of Írán girt up
 Their loins, were instant to pursue the Rúmans,
 Made sparks flash from their trenchant scimitars,
 And gave up all the cities to the flames.
 They sent the dust up both from land and people;
 None e'er recalled to mind those fields and fells.
 A miserable wail went up from Rúm,
 For men abandoned that delightful land,
 While Cæsar had not wherewithal for vengeance,
 And all the faces of his chiefs were wan.
 An envoy came to Rashnawád to say —
 "If thou, the just, hast not abandoned justice
 Our warriors have had enough of war,
 The head of Rúm's good fortune is brought low.
 If thou desirest tribute we will do
 Thy bidding and will make new terms with thee."

Moreover Cæsar sent abundant gifts,
 With purses, captives, and all manner of wealth,
 And Rashnawád received them as enough,
 The money and the jewels in the rough.

§ 6

How Humái recognised her Son

Thence they departed homeward joyfully,
 Dáráb, the worshipful, and Rashnawád,

Who halted when he reached the ruined vault,
 Whereunder he had seen Dáráb asleep.
 The launderer, with his goodwife and the jewel,
 Were there already, fearful of disgrace.
 The general summoned them forthwith; they prayed
 To God for succour and appeared before him.

V 1771

When Rashnawád beheld the man and wife
 He questioned them, they called the facts to mind,
 And told him all the truth about the matter,
 About the ark, about the uncut gem,
 Their toils, their nurture of the sucking-child,
 Their troubles, and the process of events.
 Then Rashnawád said to the man and wife.—
 "Success and gladness be for ever yours,
 For none on earth hath seen so strange a thing,
 Or even heard of such from archimages."

Immediately that man of upright mind
 Indited an epistle to Humái
 About Dáráb, the storm, his sleeping-place,
 His prowess on the battlefield withal,
 And also what the launderer had told
 About the ark, the infant, and the treasures.
 He told about the voice that he had heard,
 How he was troubled by the sound, and how,
 Just when Dáráb had mounted on his steed,
 The vault had fallen in. He told it all,
 Dispatched a courier like the blast for speed,
 Gave to his charge the ruddy gem, and said:—
 "See that thou art the waymate of the wind."

Like wind he went and bare Humái the ruby.
 He gave the letter and repeated all
 The words of Rashnawád. When she had read
 The letter, and beheld the gem, she wept;
 She knew that, on the day when she reviewed
 The troops, the gracious youth, whom she had marked
 Of mighty stature and with cheeks like spring,

Could be none other than her son indeed—
A noble and a fruitful Branch of hers.

Humái said weeping to the messenger.—
“There hath arrived a master for the world.
I was not free from care, but was concerned
About the question of the sovereignty.
I quailed before the world’s Judge, having shown
Ingratitude to Him, for He had given me
A son whom I renounced and cast away
Upon the waters of Farát. ’Twas I
That bound this jewel on his arm, misprising
The child because his sire was gone. Now God
Hath given him back to me through Rashnawád,
And with victorious fame.”

V 1772

They showered a treasure
Of gold, and mingled jewels, musk, and wine.
Humái gave largess to the indigent,
And the next se’nnight oped her hoarded drachms.
Where’er she knew there were a Fane of Fire,
The Zandavasta, and the Sada¹ feast,
There she bestowed her treasure in like wise,
And lavished gifts through all the provinces.

Upon the tenth day, early in the morning,
The general appeared before the Sháh,
And with him were the chieftains and her son,
But they concealed the case from every one.

§ 7

How Humái seated Dáráb upon the Throne

The Sháh let down the curtain of the court,
And for one se’nnight gave no audience.
She caused a golden throne to be prepared,

¹ See Vol. i. p. 123.

With two seats made of lapis lazuli
 And turquoise, with a crown all royal gems,
 A pair of armlets, a bejewelled torque,
 And an imperial robe of cloth of gold
 Wherein were woven divers kinds of jewels
 Before the Sháh there sat astrologers
 To search the stars to find a lucky day.
 So on the Shahrívar of month Bahman,
 At dawn, the Sháh gave audience to Dáráb.
 She filled a cup with rubies and another
 With ruddy gold, and, when Dáráb approached
 The hall of audience, went afar to meet him,
 Did him obeisance, showered on him those jewels
 Fit for a king, and wept blood on her breast,
 V. 1773 Embraced him, kissed him, and caressed his face,
 Then brought and set him on the golden throne,
 And scanned him wonderingly. When he was seated
 She came, gold crown in hand, kissed him and crowned
 him,
 Assuring all men that the crown was his.
 When he was thus illustrate with the crown
 Humái began to proffer her excuses,
 And said. "As touching what is past, know this
 That all hath turned to wind. 'Twas brought
 about
 By youth, access to treasure, woman's way,
 A sire deceased, a Sháh without a guide.
 If still she wrongeth thee yet let it pass,
 For mayst thou have no seat except the throne
 Of kingship."

He made answer to his mother:—

"Thou hast the royal temperament, and 'tis
 No wonder if thy heart be moved, but why
 Still harpest thou upon a single fault?
 May He that made the world approve of thee,
 And anguish fill the hearts of all thy foes.

'This story shall be my memorial,
And ne'er grow obsolete upon the roll."

The blest Humái did reverence, and said .—
"Thou shall endure as long as crown endureth."

She gave command to the high priest to call
The men of learning out of every province,
And further bade that of the troops all those
Of name, the illustrious Lions wielding swords,
Should homage that famed world-lord as the Sháh.
As they called blessings down upon his crown,
And scattered jewels thereupon, Humái
Described what she had done in secrecy,
And all the anguish that her act had caused her.
"Know ye," she added, "that of Sháh Bahman
This is the sole memorial on earth.

Ye all must walk according to his bidding,
For he is shepherd, warriors are his flock ;
His are the majesty, the diadem,
And kingship: all must look to him for succour."

V. 1774

Then from the palace rose a shout for gladness
Because they saw a glorious Branch sprout forth ;
The Sháh himself was hidden under jewels,
The world was filled with justice and with joy,
And no one recked of sorrow and of care.
Then was it that Humái addressed the chiefs,
And said: "Ye noble and accomplished sages !
I give my son the treasure and the throne—
To me a toil of two and thirty years.
Rejoice ye then, submit to his commands,
And breathe but at his bidding."

When Dáráb

Joyed in the crown of majesty, and donned
The diadem in peace, the launderer
Came with his wife apace. They said to him :—
"Blest be thy sitting on the Kaian throne,
O monarch of the world ! and be the hearts

Of all thy foes plucked out."

Daráb bade bring

Ten purses filled with gold, a goblet rich
With gems, five bales of raiment of all kinds,
And gave them to the folk that had so toiled
For him. "O busy launderer!" he said,
"Be still engrossed in business. It may be
Thou yet mayst light upon another ark,
And on another infant like Daráb!"

They went away invoking with their lips
God's blessing on the monarch of Írán.
Then set the launderer's star; he sought again
His shop and carried lye upon the plain.

INDEX

This Index and the Table of Contents at the beginning of the volume are complementary. References to the latter are in Roman numerals.

A

- ABBREVIATIONS, list of, 3
 Abú'l Kásim, Firdausi, 89, 119
 Achæmenids, dynasty, 10, 281
 Ádabád, son of Mahraspand, 16
 note
 Afrásiyáb, ruler of Túrán, 12,
 13, 21, 44, 62, 176, 203,
 208
 Agani, Sargon I. of, 293
 Ahmad, son of Sahl, lord of Maiv,
 260, 261
 Áhúman, the Evil Principle, or
 used metaphorically, 17,
 33, 36, 45, 50, 90, 99, 103,
 122, 123, 125, 147, 177, 198,
 206, 246, 271, 276
 Ahuna Vairya, sacred formula,
 17
 Akem Manan, demon, 17
 Akki, foster-father of Sargon I. of
 Agani, 293
 Alburz, mountain, 202
 Alexander the Great (Sikandar),
 30
 Alwá, Iránian hero, 166, 167
 slain by Núsh Ázan, 226
 Amoshaspentas, the, 15 *seq.*
 Ammianus Marcellinus, historian,
 13
 Ámul, city, 284
 Amulet, given by Zarduhsht to
 Asfandiyár, 130
 Andarímán, Túránian hero, 29
 Andarímán (Vandaremaini), bro-
 ther of Arjásp, 12, 46, 141,
 155
 commands one wing of the
 host, 46
 put to death, 158
 Apothegms, 78, 105, 168, 214,
 242, 249, 250, 265
 Arabs, the, 31
 Aras, river, 13, 14
 Árasti, uncle of Zarduhsht, 17
 Archei, the, constellation, 86
 Ardibilusht, month, 16, 39, 92
 note
 Ardshír (Artaxeixes). *See* Bah-
 man.
 meaning of, 259 and *note*
 Ardshír, Iránian hero,¹ 67, 288
 tells Nastúr where to find
 Zarír, 67
 takes Farámarz prisoner, 288
 Ardshír, son of Gushtásp, v, 26,
 51
 his death foretold by Jámásp,
 49
 slain, 57
 Ardshír Pápakán, founder of the
 Sásánian dynasty, 10
 Aregat-aspa. *See* Aijásp.
 Aries, constellation, 39, 109, 118,
 119, 126
 Árish, Iránian archer, 12, 62
 legend of, 12

¹ Perhaps the son of Bízhan. *See* Vol. iv. 360.

Arjâsp (Aregaf-aspa), king of
 Tûrân, v, vi, vii, 9, 11 *seq.*,
 20, 22, 24 *seq.*, 29, 31, 32, 36
 seq., 51 *seq.*, 61 *seq.*, 71, 72,
 89, 90, 98, 99, 103, 107 *seq.*,
 116, 141, 142, 145 *seq.*, 157,
 159, 161, 167, 171, 172, 180,
 206
 in receipt of tribute from
 Gushtâsp, 32
 hears of Gushtâsp's resolve
 not to pay tribute, sum-
 mons, and harangues his
 priests, 35
 sends Bîdrâfsh and Nâm-
 khâst to Gushtâsp, 37, 40
 on receiving Gushtâsp's an-
 swer calls out the host, 45
 gives one wing to Kuhram, 46
 the other to Andarînân,
 46
 the chief command to
 Guigsâr, 46
 banner to Bîdrâfsh, 46
 vanguard to Khashâsh, 46
 rear to Hûshdiy, 46
 marches against Irân, 46
 his defeat foretold by Jâmâsp,
 52
 gives one wing to Bîdrâfsh, 55
 the other to Guigsâr, 56
 centre to Nâmkhâst, 56
 takes the rear himself, 56
 gives Kuhram the command
 in chief, 56
 thrice offers rewards to any
 that will fight Zarîr, 61, 62
 his offer accepted by Bîdi-
 rafsh, 62
 calls for Bîdrâfsh to fight
 Nastûr, 69
 fights with the Irânians, 71
 defeated, 72
 his defeat proclaimed by
 Gushtâsp, 75
 hears of Asfandiyâr's im-
 prisonment and of Gush-
 tâsp's absence in Sistân, 86

Arjâsp, summons his chiefs, 86
 sends Sitûh as spy to Irân,
 86
 on receiving Sitûh's report
 calls out the host, 87
 sends Kuluam to attack
 Balkh, 90
 marches against Gushtâsp, 94
 commands the centre, 95
 defeats Gushtâsp and be-
 leaguers him on a moun-
 tain, 96
 Asfandiyâr's vow of, and
 prayer for, vengeance on,
 103, 104
 hears of Asfandiyâr's arrival,
 108
 proposes to retreat, 108
 sends away the spoil of
 Balkh, 108
 his five sons, 108
 persuaded by Gurgsâi to re-
 main and fight, 108, 109
 makes Guigsâi leader of
 the host, 109
 arrays the host, 109
 commands the centre, 109
 surveys the battlefield from a
 height, 110
 prepares for flight if needful,
 110
 dismayed at Asfandiyâr's
 prowess, reproaches Gurg-
 sâr, 111
 hears of Gurgsâi's capture
 and flees, 112
 entertains Asfandiyâr dis-
 guised as a merchant, 145
 questions Asfandiyâr, 146
 allows Asfandiyâr to enter-
 tain the Turkman chiefs,
 149
 prepares to attack Bishûtan,
 151
 bids Kuhram prepare for
 war, 151
 sends out Tukhân with
 troops to reconnoitre, 151

Arjâsp, hears from Kūhām
that Asfandiyâr has come,
152
bids the Turkmans march
out in force, 152
his palace attacked by Asfan-
diyâr, 153
aims himself and encounters
Asfandiyâr, 153, 154
beheaded by Asfandiyâr, 154
his palace fired, and his
women carried off, by
Asfandiyâr, 154, 162
his head thrown from the
ramparts of the Biazēn
Hold, 157
his sons grieve for, 157
Asfandiyâr takes the trea-
sure of, 161
Aitalabanus, 282
and Kustam, 282
Artaxeixes Longmanus, 281, 282
and Bahman, 281, 282
Aizhang, div, 203
Ascalon, city, 292
Asfandiyâr (Spentô-dâta, Spand-
dât), son of Gushtâsp, v, vi,
vii, viii, 9, 10, 12, 19, 20, 22,
24 *seq.*, 29, 30, 32, 41 *seq.*,
45, 49, 52, 65 *seq.*, 69 *seq.*,
76 *seq.*, 90 *seq.*, 97 *seq.*,
258, 259, 261, 279, 281 *seq.*,
289, 290, 293
his invulnerability, 19
his sisters, vi, 20, 22
carried off by the Turk-
mans, 93, 100, 171
rescued by, 153, 162
lament over, 252 *seq.*
his marriage with Humâi, 22,
74
ignored by Firdausi, 22
birth of, 32
answers, in conjunction with
Zarir and Jâmâsp, Arjâsp's
letter, 42
his triumph over Arjâsp
foretold by Jâmâsp, 52

Asfandiyâr, given command of one
wing, 55
addresses his five brothers, 65
hears his father's offer of the
crown and throne to the
avenger of Zarir, 66
slays Bîdrâfsh, 70
presents the head of Bîdrâfsh
and the steed of Zarir to
Gushtâsp, 71
divides the host, 71
attacks with Nastûr and
Nûsh Âzar the Turkmans,
71
grants quarter to the Turk-
mans, 72
made chief ruler of Iriân
under Gushtâsp and sent
by him to convert the
world, 76
rests from his labours, 77
makes Faishîward governor
of Khurâsân, 77
reports the success of his
administration to Gushtâ-
sp, 77
slandered by Guizm, 78
recalled to court, 80 *seq.*
his four sons, 80
resigns his host to Bahman,
82
arraigned by Gushtâsp, 83
put in bonds, 84
sent to Gumbadân, 84
solaced by Bahman and
others, 85
Jâmâsp advises Gushtâsp to
release, 97
hears of arrival of Jâmâsp,
98, 99
his parley with Jâmâsp, 99
seq.
his eight and thirty brothers,
101, 103, 111, 160
bids Jâmâsp send for black-
smiths, 101
breaks his bonds himself, 102,
206

Asfandiyái, calls for his steed, and arms, 102
 sets off with Jámásp, Bahman, and Núsh Ázar, 103
 his vow, 103
 laments over Farshíward, 104
 prays that he may avenge Faishíward on Aijásp, 104
 shrouds Farshíward, 105
 sees and addresses the corpse of Guiazam, 105
 passes the Turkman trenches, and defeats the outpost, 106
 his interview with Gushtásp, 106
 receives the promise of the crown and undertakes to deliver Gushtásp, 107
 arrays and leads the host, 109
 attacks the Turkmans, 110
 defeats Kuhram, 110
 takes Gurgsái prisoner, 111
 defeats Aijásp, 112, 206
 grants quarter to the Turkmans, 113
 distributes the spoil, 114
 undertakes to rescue his sisters from the Turkmans, 115
 prepares to invade Túrán, 115
 rivalry in legend between Rustam and, 116
 Haft Khwán of, compared with Rustam's, 117
 quits Balkh and goes, with Gurgsár as guide, to Túrán, 120
 offers the kingdom of the Turkmans to Gurgsái in return for faithful service, 120
 questions Gurgsár, 120 *seq.*, 124, 125, 128, 131, 134, 139

Asfandiyái, during his adventures in the Seven Stages, leaves Bishútan in command, 122, 124, 126, 129, 132 *note*, 144
 praised by Bishútan and the host, 123, 125, 131, 133
 has a scythed chariot made, 126
 revived by Bishútan after encountering the dragon, 127
 song of, 129
 amulet given to, by Zaiduhsht, 130
 encourages the Iránians to persevere, 136
 prays for deliverance from the snow, 138
 leaves the baggage behind, 138
 reproaches Guigsár for giving false information, 139, 140
 offers to make Gurgsár captain of the Brazen Hold if he will be a trusty guide, 140
 and the host, guided by Gurgsár, cross the ford, 140
 his final questioning of Guigsár, 141
 cursed by Gurgsár, 141
 slays Guigsár, 141
 surveys the Brazen Hold, 142
 captures, questions, and slays two Turkmans, 142
 and Bishútan consult, 143
 his stratagem to take the Brazen Hold, 116, 143
 in the disguise of a merchant interviews Arjásp, 145
 assumes the name of Khairád, 146
 questioned by Arjásp, 146
 trades as a merchant in the Brazen Hold, 147
 meets his sisters, 147

Asfandiyár, gives a banquet to the Turkman chiefs, 149
 surprises the Brazen Hold, 152 *seq.*
 provides for his sisters' safety, 153
 attacks the palace of Arjâsp, 153
 encounters Arjâsp, 154
 beheads Arjâsp, 154
 fires Arjâsp's palace, 154
 carries off the women, 154
 quits the Brazen Hold and leaves Sáwa in charge, 154
 joins Bishútan, 155
 pursues Kuhram to the Brazen Hold, 156
 encounters and takes Kuhram prisoner, 157
 grants no quarter to the Turkman, 158
 puts to death Andarimán and Kuhram, 158 and *note*
 announces his victory to Gushtâsp, 159
 disposes of the spoil, 161
 carries off his sisters, the womenfolk of Arjâsp, and others from the Brazen Hold, 162
 sets fire to, and dismantles, the Brazen Hold, 162
 sends his sons homeward by different routes, 162
 returns himself by the Seven Stages, 162
 picks up his left baggage, 162
 hunts while waiting for his sons, 162
 is rejoined by his sons, 163
 his welcome on his return to Írán, 163
 banquets with Gushtâsp, 164
 his fight with Rustam, Story of, vii, viii, 166 *seq.*
 recited by Nadí, son of Hárith, at Mecca, 166

Asfandiyár, complains to his mother of Gushtâsp's treatment of him, 167
 counselled by his mother, 168, 175
 his fate foretold by Jámâsp, 169
 recounts his deeds before Gushtâsp, 170
 promised the throne by Gushtâsp when he has brought Rustam and his kin in bonds to court, 173, 174
 meets with an ill omen on starting for Zâbulistân, 177
 consults with Bishútan, 178
 sends Bahman on an embassy, 179 *seq.*
 his message to Rustam, 179
 receives Rustam's answer from, and is wroth with, Bahman, 191
 converses of Rustam with Bishútan, 192
 goes attended to meet Rustam, 192
 parleys with Rustam, 192 *seq.*
 declines Rustam's invitation to visit him, 193
 invites Rustam to a feast, 195
 repents of having invited Rustam, 196
 counselled by Bishútan to keep on friendly terms with Rustam, 196, 217
 does not summon Rustam to the feast, 197
 his wrangle with Rustam, 198 *seq.*
 does not assign Rustam his proper seat at the feast, 200
 remonstrated with by Rustam, 200
 bids Bahman resign his own seat to Rustam, 200
 vilifies Zâl and Rustam, 201
 recounts his lineage, 205
 exploits, 205

Asfandiyár, recounts his capture of a hill-fort, 206
 tries a handgrip with Rustam, 208
 challenges Rustam, 209
 astonished at Rustam's prowess at the board, 210
 declines Rustam's overtures, 211 *seq*
 calls Zábulistán "Babblestead," 216
 parodies Rustam's address to royal tent-enclosure, 216
 arms for fight with Rustam, 223
 refuses Rustam's suggestion of a general engagement, 224
 informed by Bahman of the slaying of Núsh Ázar and Mih-i-Núsh, 227
 enraged with Rustam, 228
 wounds Rustam and Rakhsh, 229
 jeers at Rustam, 229
 calls upon Rustam to surrender, 230
 returns to camp, laments for Núsh Ázar and Mih-i-Núsh, and sends their corpses to Gushtásp with a message, 232
 converses with Bishútan of the fight with Rustam, 232, 240
 the Simugh instructs Rustam how to overcome, 237 *seq.*
 branch of tamarisk fatal to, 239 and *note*
 summoned by Rustam to fight and becomes despondent, 240
 Rustam's final effort for peace with, 241 *seq*
 Bahman and Bishútan hear of the overthrow of, 244
 his address to Bishútan, 245

Asfandiyár, Rustam bewails, 246
 confides Bahman to Rustam, 248
 foretells evil for Rustam, 248
 gives his last charge to Bishútan, 249
 death of, 250
 Rustam laments over, 250
 his corpse sent to Gushtásp by Rustam, 251
 his funeral procession conducted by Bishútan, 251
 the lamentations over, 252 *seq.*
 his corpse displayed by Bishútan, 253
 Rustam writes to Gushtásp to excuse himself in the matter of, 256
 Xeixes and, 282
 Bahman on the vengeance due for, 283
 referred to, 288
 Asfandiyár - náma (Spand - dát-náma), 26, 27
 Ashkánian dynasty, 10, 282
 Asia, 293
 Assyria, 292
 Atossa, wife of Cambyses and Darius Hystaspis, 11
 = Hutaosa (?), 11
 Amard, father of Luluásp, 205
 Auvač-aspa (Luluásp), 11
 Áyás, region, 61, 74, 107
 Ázád Sarv, Firdausi's authority for the Story of Rustam and Shaghád, 260, 261, 263
 Ázád Sarv, agent of Núshirwán, 261
 Ázar Afirúz, third son of Asfandiyár, 81
 Ázabáján, province, 16
 Azamdukht, Sháh, 294

B

BABBLESTEAD, nonce name given to Zábulistán by Asfandiyár, 216

Babylon, 293
 hanging gardens of, 293
 Badr, battle of, 166
 Baghdád, city, 28
 Bahman (Aīdshīr, Aītaxeīxes),
 Shāh, vii, viii, 9, 81, 166,
 248, 251, 254, 279 *seq.*, 293,
 294, 297, 303, 310
 oldest son of Asfandiyār, 80
 Asfandiyār resigns the host
 to, 82
 hears of Asfandiyār's im-
 prisonment, 85
 goes with others to solace
 him, 85
 accompanies Asfandiyār from
 Gumbadán, 103
 sent on an embassy, 179
 seq.
 crosses the Hīmund, 182
 his coming reported to Zāl,
 182
 his interview with Zāl, 183
 follows Rustam to the hunt-
 ing-ground, 184
 tries to kill Rustam, 184
 his interview with Rustam,
 185 *seq.*
 entertained by Rustam, 186
 astonished at Rustam's appe-
 tite, 186
 leaves Rustam, 190
 gives Rustam's answer to
 Asfandiyār, 191
 Asfandiyār's wrath with, 191
 resigns his seat at the feast
 to Rustam, 200
 informs Asfandiyār of the
 slaying of Nūsh Ázar and
 Mīhr-i-Nūsh, 227
 hears of Asfandiyār's over-
 throw, 244
 confided to Rustam by Asfan-
 diyār, 248
 Zawwā warns Rustam against
 250
 remains with Rustam, 252,
 256

Bahman, instructed by Rustam
 and profits thereby, 256,
 257
 Gushtāsp advised by Jámāsp
 to write to, 258
 Gushtāsp's letter of recall to,
 258
 equipped by Rustam for his
 journey, 258
 welcomed and called Ardshīr
 by Gushtāsp, 259
 his long arms, 259
 appointed by Gushtāsp to
 succeed him, 279
 his historical position in
 Persian legend, 281
 and Aītaxeīxes Longimanus,
 282
 how he came to be known
 as Aīdshīr, 281
 ascends the throne and har-
 angues the chiefs on the
 vengeance due for Asfan-
 diyār, 283
 invades Sīstān, 284 *seq.*
 sends a hostile message to
 Zāl, 285
 rejects Zāl's conciliatory over-
 tures, 286
 sacks Zāl's palace, 286
 pillages Zābulistān, 287
 fights, defeats, and executes
 Farāmaīz, 287, 288
 Bīshūtān intercedes for Zāl
 with, 288
 stops the pillage of Zābul and
 releases Zāl, 289
 quits Zābul by Bīshūtān's
 advice, 290
 passes over his son Sā'ān and
 nominates Humāi and her
 issue as successors to the
 throne, 291
 death of, 294
 Bahman (Vohu Manau, Vohū-
 man), ameshaspena, 16
 month, 310
 Balaam, prophet, 15

- Balkh, city, v, vi, 18, 20, 29, 31, 33, 41, 48, 73, 86, 87, 91, 104, 120, 171, 255
 Kuhram sent by Arjāsp to attack, 90
 stormed, 92, 93
 its spoil sent away by Arjāsp, 108
 Asfandiyār quits, to invade Túrān, 120
- Bái, mountain-range, 30
- Barbaristān, 75
 king of, sends embassy to Gushtāsp, 75
- Bástān-nāma (Khudái-nāma), 24, 27, 261
- Bastavaii (Bastvar, Nastúr), 12
- Bastvar (Bastavani, Nastúr), 25
- Battlestead = Brazen Hold, 121
- Battle of the Twelve Rukhs, referred to, 29
- Bel, god, 293
 temple of, 293
- Bibliotheca*, of Diodorus, 293
- Bíd, div, 204
- Bidrafsh (Vidrafsh), Túrānian hero, v, 24, 25, 37, 41, 51, 52, 62 *seq*
 goes as envoy to Gushtāsp, 37, 40 *seq*.
 returns with Gushtāsp's answer, 44
 receives banner from Aijāsp, 46
 given command of one wing, 56
 volunteers to fight Zarín, 62
 slays Zarín, 63
 fights Nastúr, 70
 slain by Asfandiyār, 70
 his head presented to Gushtāsp, 71
- Bih Afíid, daughter of Gushtāsp, 22, 100
 taken captive by the Turkmans, 93, 94, 100
 goes with Humái to draw water and meets Asfandiyār, 147
- Bih Áfrid, escapes from Arjāsp's palace, 153
 laments over Asfandiyār, 252
 reproaches Gushtāsp, 254
- Bihstún, mountain, 11
 inscription, 11
- Bihzád, Gushtāsp's steed, 56, 69
- Binalúd, mountain-range, 29
- Bishútān (Peshó-tanu), brother of Asfandiyār, vii, viii, 12, 66, 117, 178, 179, 182, 195, 216, 223, 232, 244 *seq*, 249 *seq*, 261, 288 *seq*.
 an immortal, 12, 19
 birth of, 32
 commands the host during Asfandiyār's absence in the Seven Stages, 122, 124, 126, 129, 132 *note*, 144, 150
 and the host praise Asfandiyār, 123, 125, 131, 133
 revives Asfandiyār after his encounter with the dragon, 127
 prays for deliverance from the snow, 138
 and Asfandiyār consult, 143
 sees Asfandiyār's signal and approaches the Brazen Hold, 150
 passes himself off as Asfandiyār, 143, 151, 152
 joined by Asfandiyār, 155
 advises Asfandiyār, 179
 Asfandiyār holds talk about Rustam with, 192
 advises Asfandiyār to maintain friendly relations with Rustam, 196, 217
 has Rustam served with untempered wine, 211
 his despair at the situation between Rustam and Asfandiyār, 218
 laments for Nūsh Azar and Mīhr-i-Nūsh, 232
 Asfandiyār talks of the fight with Rustam to, 232, 240

- Bishútán, hears of Asfandiyár's overthrow and laments for him, 244
 Rustam bewails Asfandiyár to, 246
 Asfandiyár's last charge to, 249
 heads Asfandiyár's funeral train, 251
 displays the corpse of Asfandiyár, 253
 reproaches Gushtásp, 253
 Jámásp, 254
 consoles Katáyún, 255
 supports Rustam's overtures to Gushtásp, 257
 intended by Gushtásp to be Bahman's minister, 279
 intercedes for Zál, 288
 his intercession accepted, 289
 counsels Bahman to quit Zábúl, 290
 Bístán, mountain, 56, 184
 = Rustam, 229
 Bízhan, son of Gív, Iránian hero, 116
 Black horse, Gushtásp's, 18, 28
 Dív. *See* Dív
 Brádrók-résh, a Karap, 15
 the slayer of Zarduhsht, 15
 Brahman, 207
 Brazen Hold, the, vi, vii, 116, 117, 119 *seq.*, 135, 141 *seq.*, 159, 197, 206, 255
 route to, 120, 135
 described, 121, 135, 141
 Asfandiyár's stratagem for taking, 116, 143
 surprised from within by Asfandiyár, 152 *seq.*
 captured by Asfandiyár and left in the charge of Sáwa, 154
 Arjásp's head thrown from the ramparts of, 157
 destroyed by Asfandiyár, 162
 Búiti, demon, 17
 Burial-place of Rustam, 287
- Burial-place of Rustam's race, the scene of battle between Bahman and Farámarz, 287
 Bust, fortress and district in Sístán, 173, 277, 287
 Búzurjmihi, chief minister of Núshiwán, 261
- C
- CÆSAR, 11, 32, 167
 sends embassy to Gushtásp on hearing of Arjásp's defeat, 75
 daughter of = Katáyún, 205
 sues to Rashnawád for peace, 307
 Cambyzes, son of Cyrus, 10, 11
 Candahar. *See* Kandahár.
 Caspian Sea, 13
 Chách (Táshkand), city in Túrán, 244
 Chugil, city in Turkistán, 54, 86, 110, 139
 monarch of, 110
 commands the left, 110
 = Arjásp, 54, 86
 Turkman of = Gurgsái, 139
 Chín, country (often = Túrán), 25, 31, 37 *seq.*, 45, 47, 50, 54, 55, 58 *seq.*, 72, 93, 107, 108, 118, 142, 156, 158, 161, 162, 171, 173, 188, 198, 199, 203, 205, 208, 284
 images of, 35
 prince of = Arjásp, 35
 king of = Arjásp, 36, 52, 55, 69, 86, 108
 sea of, 109, 203, 233, 239 *note*
 brocade of, 130, 144, 145, 179, 219, 251
 silk of, 159, 295
 Khán of, 199, 220
 Faghfúr of, 221
 Chionitæ, people, 13
 Chihrzád (Humái, daughter and wife of Sháh Bahman), 290
 and *note*. *See* Humái.
 meaning of, 190 *note*

Contents, Table of, v
 Cross, the, captured by Dáráb, 306
 and *note*
 Cypress of Kishmar, the, 27, 28,
 34, 35
 account of, 28, 34, 35
 Gushtásp and, 34, 35
 Cyrius, 10

D

DABISTÁN, treatise, 28
 its account of the Cypress of
 Kishmar, 28
 Dai, month, 43
 Dai pa Mihr, day, 16
 Dáitya, river, 13
 Dakiki, poet, v, vi, 10, 13, 20 *seq.*,
 30, 87
 account of, 20
 and Firdausi, 21 *seq.*, 30, 87,
 88
 his work compared with the
 Yátkár-i-Zaiján, 24 *seq.*
 Damáwand, mountain, 12
 Danube, river, 11
 Dará, Sháh, 281
 origin of name, 297 *note*
 Dáiáb, Sháh, viii, ix, 281, 292,
 293, 297 *seq.*
 founding legend of, 293 *seq.*
 Tabari's version of, 297
 note
 birth of, 294
 referred to, 294 *seq.*
 exposed on the Farát, 295
 found and adopted by a
 launderer, 296 *seq.*
 his royal birth asserts itself,
 298
 youthful escapades of, 298
 brought up as a cavalier, 299
 feels lack of natural affection
 for the launderer, 300
 hears of his case from the
 launderer's wife, 300
 enlists, 301
 seen by Humái, 302

Dáiáb, and the adventure of the
 ruined vault, 303
 receives gifts from Rashna-
 wád, 304
 questioned by Rashnawád,
 304
 his prowess against the Rú-
 mans, 305, 306
 praised and rewarded by
 Rashnawád, 305, 306
 captures the Cross, 306 and
 note
 offered the spoil by Rash-
 nawád, 306
 takes of the spoil one spear,
 307
 returns to Ián, 307
 Rashnawád hears from the
 launderer and his wife of
 the case of, 308
 Rashnawád writes to Humái
 about, 308
 recognised by Humái as being
 her son, 308
 appears with Rashnawád
 before Humái, 309 *seq.*
 crowned by Humái and
 accepts her excuses, 310
 Humái proclaims the acces-
 sion of, 311
 visited by, and rewards, the
 launderer and his wife,
 311, 312
 Dareja, river, 14
 Darius, Hystaspis, 10, 11
 his reign and Gushtásp's
 compared, 11
 his change of religion, 11
 Darkness, Land of (the Gloom),
 30
 Darún, religious rite, 19
 Daryai Rúd, river, 14
 Deinon, or Dinon, historian, 282
 Deiketo, goddess, 292
 legend of, 292
 Diodorus, historian, 293
 Bibliotheca of, 293
 Dirázdest (Longimanus), 281

Dív, demon (Daéva), 32, 58, 66,
71, 108, 174, 201, 202, 213,
220, 230, 245
= Áhriman, 35, 81, 180, 188,
189, 194, 195, 196, 218, 228,
242
a, informs Arjasp of Gush-
tásp's resolve not to pay
tribute, 36
White, 117, 176, 203, 207,
234
Black, 199
Sám and the, 203
Dualism, taught by Uimuzd to
Zarduhsht, 16
Dughdhlová, mother of Zarduhsht,
14, 15
Dáíásróbó, a Kaiap, 15

E

EUPHRATES (Farát), river, 292

F

FACHFÚR, dynastic title of the
princes of Chín and Máchin,
221
Farámaiz, son of Rustam, vii,
viii, 173, 174, 182, 183, 198,
231, 260, 261, 272, 274, 276,
277, 281, 283, 284
referred to, 184
and Zawána sent by Rustam
to bid Zál and Rúdába pre-
pare to receive Asfandiyár,
190
slays Milr-i-Núsh, 227
goes to Rustam and Asfan-
diyár, 247
marches against Kábul, 274,
276
takes the corpses of Rustam,
Zawána, and Rakhsh from
the pits, and conveys them
to Zábul for burial, 274 *seq.*
fights with the king of Kábul
and puts him and his kin
to death, 276, 277

Farámaiz, makes a Zábulí king
of Kábul, 277
returns to Zábul, 277
hears of Bahman's invasion
and marches against him,
287
defeated and executed, 288
Farát, river (Euphrates), viii, 294,
309
Daráb cast away upon, 295
Farídún, Sháh, 32, 34, 160, 180,
196, 204 *seq.*, 245, 260, 261,
271, 283
flag of = flag of Káwa, 59
Farshídward, brother of Asfandi-
yár, vi, 20, 22, 104, 110,
114, 141, 171
governor of Khurásán, 77
stationed on the Iránian
night, 94
mortally wounded by Kuh-
ram, 95, 101, 104
Asfandiyár resolves to avenge,
101
Asfandiyár laments over, and
prays that he may avenge,
104
dies, 104
shrouded by Asfandiyár, 105
Farúd, son of Siyáwush and half
brother of Kai Khusráu, 30
Firdausí, v, vi, 10, 20 *seq.*, 29, 30,
87, 118, 282
and Dakikí, 21 *seq.*, 30, 87,
88
references of, autobiographi-
cal, 30, 88, 261 *seq.*
to Bástán-náma, 88
his praise of Mahmúd, 30,
89, 118, 119, 262
on the Story of Rustam and
Shaghád, 260 *seq.*
Frasdánava, lake or river, 13
Frashókart, son of Gushtásp, 26

G

GANG, mountain, 216
Gaiámik-kart. *See* Gaiámi.

Gargwi, Iránian hero, 109
 commands the left, 109
 Garshásp, Iránian hero, 202
 Gáthas, the, 11, 12, 17
 Gelani, people, 13. *See* Gilán.
 Genealogies, fictitious, 282, 293
 Ghaznín, city in Kábulistán, 173
 Ghúl, a sorceress, 117, 128
 referred to, 121, 130, 131
 Ghundi, a div, 204
 Gilán, region in Yrán on the
 south-western shores of
 the Caspian, 13
 Gúrámi (Garámik-kait), son of
 Jámásp, v, 24 *seq.*, 58
 his death foretold by Jámásp,
 50
 worsts Námkhást, 59
 rescues Káwa's flag, 59
 slain, 59
 Girdkuh, stronghold, 30
 Giv, Iránian hero, 207, 208
 Gloom, the (Land of Darkness),
 30, 76
 Glory, the divine. *See* Grace.
 Grace, or Gloiy, the divine, 14,
 15, 32, 34 *seq.*, 39, 45, 52,
 and *passim*
 Greeks, the, 282
 Gúdaiz, Iránian hero, 207, 208
 Gulgún, steed of Luhiásp, 64
 Gumbadán, stronghold, 29, 30,
 86, 152, 171, 177, 206
 Asfandiyár imprisoned at, 84
 Gurazm (Kavárazem), a relative of
 Gushtásp, vi, 12, 22, 53, 99,
 101, 102, 104 *seq.*, 171, 205, 261
 envies Asfandiyár, 78
 referred to, 97
 death of, 97
 Asfandiyár addresses the
 corpse of, 105
 Gurgsár, tribe, 43 and *note*
 Gurgsái, Túránian hero, vi, 117,
 120 *seq.*, 124 *seq.*, 128, 131
 seq., 146, 233 *note*
 made captain of the host by
 Aijásp, 46

Gurgsái, given command of one
 wing, 56
 persuades Aijásp to remain
 and fight Asfandiyár, 108,
 109
 made leader of the host, 109
 taken prisoner by Asfandiyár,
 111
 offers to guide Asfandiyár to
 the Brazen Hold, 113
 goes as guide with Asfandi-
 yár to Túrán, 120
 offered the kingdom of the
 Turkmans by Asfandiyár in
 return for faithful service,
 120
 describes the route to the
 Brazen Hold, and the Seven
 Stages, 120 *seq.*, 124 *seq.*,
 128, 132, 134
 his chagrin at Asfandiyár's
 successes, 124, 128, 131, 133
 reproached by Asfandiyár for
 giving false information,
 139, 140
 offered the captainship of the
 Brazen Hold by Asfandi-
 yár in return for trusty
 guidance, 140
 shows the Iránians a ford,
 140
 questioned by Asfandiyár for
 the last time, 141
 curses Asfandiyár, 141
 slain by Asfandiyár, 141
 Guirwí, son of Zira, Túránian hero,
 272
 Gushtásp (Vistáspa, Vishtásp),
 Sháh, v, vi, vii, viii, 9 *seq.*,
 18 *seq.*, 24 *seq.*, 28, 29, 31 *seq.*,
 47 *seq.*, 61, 63, 68, 74 *seq.*,
 90, 92 *seq.*, 103 *seq.*, 119,
 130, 148, 154, 155, 159, 166
 seq., 180, 181, 183, 205, 206,
 208 *seq.*, 213, 216, 220, 221,
 233 *note*, 243, 248 *seq.*, 279,
 281, 289, 293
 reign of, 9 *seq.*

- Gushtásp, reign of, division of, 9
 points of interest in, 9
 compared with that of
 Darius Hystaspis, 10
 legend of Zarduhsht and, 18
 the black horse of, 18, 28
 sees his place in Paradise, 19
 ridge of, 29
 succeeds Luhrásp as Sháh, 31
 his sons, 32
 pays yearly tribute to Arjásp,
 32
 converted by Zarduhsht, 33
 helps to spread the Faith, 34
 establishes Mihr Barzín and
 other Fire-fanes, 34
 and the Cypress of Kishmai,
 34
 advised by Zarduhsht not to
 pay tribute to Arjásp, 35
 receives embassy from Ar-
 jásp and takes counsel with
 his chiefs, 41
 sends answer to Arjásp, 43
 seq.
 summons the host, 47
 marches against Arjásp, 48
 bids Jámásp foretell the issue
 of the fight, 48
 his distress at Jámásp's pro-
 phhecy, 53
 encouraged to fight by
 Jámásp, 54
 gives Zarír the standard and
 command of the centre, 55
 one wing to Asfandiyár,
 55
 other wing to Shidasp, 55
 the rear to Nastúr, 55
 takes up his position on a
 height, 55, 56, 63
 referred to, 60, 64 *seq.*, 89
 hears of the death of Zarír,
 64
 wishes to avenge Zarír, 64, 68
 dissuaded by Jámásp, 64, 69
 offers his daughter Humái to
 the avenger of Zarír, 64
- Gushtásp, offers his crown and
 throne to the avenger of
 Zarír, 65
 gives his steed and arms to
 Nastúr, 69
 sees and laments over Zarír's
 corpse, 73
 bids Nastúr lead the host
 home, 74
 marries Humái to Asfandiyár,
 74
 gives Nastúr a command and
 bids him invade Túrán,
 74
 rewards the host, 75
 builds a Fire-fane and makes
 Jámásp its archmage, 75
 Mansion of, 75
 writes to his governors to an-
 nounce the defeat of Arjásp,
 75
 receives embassies and tri-
 bute from Cæsar and from
 the kings of Barbaristán,
 Hind, and Sind, 75
 makes Asfandiyár chief ruler
 of Irán and sends him to
 convert the world, 76
 sends the Zandavasta to each
 clime, 77
 Gurazm slanders Asfandiyár
 to, 78
 sends Jámásp to recall As-
 fandiyár to court, 80
 convokes an assembly and
 arraigns Asfandiyár, 82 *seq.*
 puts Asfandiyár in bonds, 84
 sends Asfandiyár to Gum-
 badán, 84
 takes the Zandavasta to Sis-
 tán, 85
 welcomed by Rustam and
 Zál, 85
 the kings revolt from, 85
 while in Sistán hears from his
 wife of the storming of
 Balkh and the captivity of
 his daughters, 93

Gushtásp, calls together his chiefs and summons the host, 94
 marches from Sistán toward Balkh, 94
 takes command of the centie, 94
 has thirty-eight sons slain, and is worsted, in fight with Arjásp, 95, 96
 takes refuge on a mountain, 96, 100
 consults Jámásp, 96
 sends Jámásp to Asfandiyár with the offer of the crown in return for help, 97
 his interview with, and promise to resign the crown to, Asfandiyár, 106
 commands the centie, 109
 makes thanksgiving for victory, 113
 promises to resign the crown to Asfandiyár when he has delivered his sisters from captivity, 114
 summons troops, rewards Asfandiyár, and sends him to invade Túrán, 115
 hears of Asfandiyár's success and writes to him, 160
 gives a banquet on Asfandiyár's return, 164
 consults Jámásp and the astrologers on Asfandiyár's future, 168
 Asfandiyár recounts his deeds before, 170 *seq.*
 promises to resign the throne to Asfandiyár when he has brought Rustam and his kin in bonds to court, 173, 174
 Asfandiyár sends the corpses of Núsh Ázai and Mihr-i-Núsh, and a message to, 232
 Asfandiyár's last message to, 249

Gushtásp, hears of Asfandiyár's death and laments for him, 252
 the wrath of the nobles with, 252
 reproached by Bishútan, 253
 Humái and Bili Áfríd, 254
 Rustam's overtures to, 256
 Bishútan testifies in Rustam's favour to, 257
 is reconciled, and writes, to Rustam, 257
 advised by Jámásp to write to Bahman, 258
 writes to Rustam and Bahman to recall the latter, 258
 welcomes and gives Bahman the name Ardshir, 259
 tells Jámásp of his wishes as to the succession, 279
 dies, 280

H

HAFT KHWÁN, 117 and *note* of Rustam and Asfandiyár compared, 117
 Hamávan, country (Yaman), 174, 207, 208, 220
 monarch of, 176
 Hamávan, mountain, 116
 Háith, father of Nadr (*q.v.*), 166
 Hasan Sabbáh, The Old Man of the Mountain, 30
 Hazái, Hazárán, Túránian hero, 24, 56, 59
 Heraclius, Eastern Roman Emperor, 306 *note*
 Hind, Hindústán, 75, 76, 188, 257, 262, 265, 277
 kings of, send tribute to Gushtásp, 75
 Hiong-Nu, people, 13
 Hirmund, river in Sistán, 178, 182, 186, 191, 196, 219, 285
 referred to, 198, 231

Hold, The Brazen *See* Brazen Hold.
 Horse, black, Gushtásp's. *See* Black horse
 Hrazdán, river in Armenia, 13
 Huma. *See* Humái.
 Humái (Huma), daughter of Gushtásp, 12, 22, 25, 100
 her marriage with Asfandiyár, 22, 74
 ignored by Firdausí, 22
 her hand offered to the avenger of Zarír, 64
 taken captive by the Turks, 93, 100
 goes with Bih Afríd to draw water and meets Asfandiyár, 147
 escapes from Aijásp's palace, 153
 laments over Asfandiyár, 252
 reproaches Gushtásp, 254
 Humái (Chihrzád), Sháh, viii, ix,
 daughter and wife of Bahman, 281, 290 *seq.*, 301, 302, 308 *seq.*
 and her issue appointed by Bahman to succeed him, 291
 and Semiramis, 293
 genealogies of, 293
 accession of, 294
 Dáráb born of, 294
 referred to, 296
 hears of Róman invasion and bids Rashnawád lead forth the host, 301
 reviews the host, 302
 affected on seeing Dáráb, 302
 hears from Rashnawád about Dáráb, 308
 recognises that Dáráb is her son, 308
 her largess of thanksgiving, 309
 Rashnawád and Dáráb appear before, 309 *seq.*

Humái, crowns, and excuses herself to, Dáráb, 310
 proclaims Dáráb, 311
 Huns, the, 13
 Húshang, Sháh, 180, 245
 Húshdiv, Túránian hero, 46
 in charge of the rear, 46
 Hutaosa, wife of Gushtásp, 11
 = Atossa (?), 11
 Hvyaozas (Khyóns), people, 13
 Hyapates, son of Semiramis, 292
 Hydaspes, son of Semiramis, 292
 Hystaspes, father of Darius I., 10
 governor of Parthia, 10

I

IBLÍS, the Muhammadan Devil, 174, 218
 Indus, river, 293
 Iraj, son of Faridún, 42, 44, 261
 Irán, v, viii, 12, 20, 21, 25, 29, 35, and *passim*
 Iránians, the, v, 12, 29, 40, 50, 56, 59, 72, 86, 95, 99, 105, 112, 136, 138, 154, 156, 185, 207, 224 *seq.*
 wish to withdraw from the Seven Stages, 135
 encouraged to persevere by Asfandiyái, 136
 provoked to combat by Zawára, 225
 Istakhr (Persepolis), 293
 buildings at, attributed to Humái, 293

J

JAGATAI, mountain-range, 29
 Jámásp, minister of Gushtásp, v, vi, 12, 22, 24 *seq.*, 48, 58, 80 *seq.*, 169 *seq.*, 206, 216, 248, 257, 258, 279
 his omniscience, 19, 48
 answers, in conjunction with Zarír and Asfandiyár, Arjásp's letter, 42

- Jámásp, foretells the death in battle of—
 Aidshú, 49
 Shidasp, 50
 Guámi, 50
 exploits of Nastúr, 50
 death of Nivzár, 51
 Zarú, 52, 70 *note*
 triumph of Asfandiyár, 52
 defeat of Arjásp, 52
 encourages Gushtásp to fight, 54
 referred to, 59, 102
 dissuades Gushtásp from avenging Zarú, 64, 68
 made archmage of Fire-temple built by Gushtásp, 75
 sent to recall Asfandiyár to court, 80 *seq.*
 advises Gushtásp, when beleaguered by Arjásp, to release Asfandiyá, 97
 volunteers to go to Asfandiyár, 97
 reaches Gumbadán in disguise, 98
 his interview with Asfandiyá, 99 *seq.*
 sends for blacksmiths to unchain Asfandiyá, 101
 sets off with Asfandiyár, Bahman, and Núsh Azar, 103
 foretells Asfandiyár's fate, 169
 reproached by Bishútan, 254
 advises Gushtásp to write to Bahman, 257
 writes by Gushtásp's orders to recall Bahman, 258
 Gushtásp tells his intention as to the succession to, 279
 Jamshíd, Sháh, 32, 34, 38, 47, 180, 202, 215, 216, 245, 271, 284
 Jerusalem, 306 *note*
- Jihún, river (the Oxus), 12, 29, 40, 45, 48, 203
 Jupiter, planet, 256
- K
- KABÁB, small pieces of meat skewered together, for roasting, 152
 Kábul, Kábulistán, viii, 126, 170, 173, 224, 242, 251, 260, 263 *seq.*, 271, 273 *seq.*, 284, 287
 Shaghád sent to be brought up at, 264
 king of, viii, 264, 271
 daughter of, marries Shaghád, 264
 and Shaghád plot against Rustam, 265 *seq.*
 gives a feast, 266
 pretends to quarrel with Shaghád, 266
 his treachery, 268 *seq.*
 grovels before Rustam, 269
 entertains Rustam and invites him to hunt, 269
 his hypocrisy, 271
 Farámarz sent against, 274, 276
 defeated and put to death with all his kin, 277
 tribute of, question about, 265
 Farámarz makes a Zábulí king over, 277
 Kaian, Kaiánian, race and dynasty, v, 7 *seq.*, 10, 47, 49, 52, 54, 57, 59, 60, 67 *seq.*, 73 *seq.*, 79, 86, 91, 97, 122, 168, 203, 210, 223, 253, 254, 282, 288, 289, 291, 311
 Kaiánush, brother of Faridún, 261

- Kai Káús, Sháh, 29, 30, 116, 173, 174, 190, 203, 207, 208, 210, 215, 216
 his attempt to fly referred to, 174
 Rustam's patent from, 203
- Kai Khusiau, Sháh, 10, 12, 21, 39, 173, 188, 203, 204, 208, 215, 284, 289
 Rustam's patent from, 203
- Kai Kubád, Sháh, 174, 180, 188, 189, 202, 205, 210, 221, 272
- Kámús, Túránian hero, 167, 199, 220
- Kandahár, city, 233 *note*
- Kamúj, city in Hindústán, 257
- Karap (Karpan), 14, 17
 meaning of, 14
- Kara su, river, 14
- Karimán, the great-great-grandfather of Rustam, 202
- Karpan (Karap), 14
- Kárun, mountain, 112
- Kashán, city and region in Túrán, 39
- Kashmar. *See* Kishmai.
- Kashmí, country, 263
- Kaswin, city, 30
- Katáyún (Náhid), daughter of Cæsar and wife of Gushtásp, vii, 11, 253
 her sons, 32
 counsels Asfandiyár, 168, 175 referred to, 205, 249, 252
 her ancestry, 205
 Asfandiyár's last message to, 249
 laments over Asfandiyár, 252
 consoled by Bishútan, 255
- Káús. *See* Kai Káús.
- Kavátazem (Gurazm), 12
- Kavi (Kavig), 14
- Kavig (Kavi), 14, 17
 meaning of, 14
- Káwa, flag of, 59, 69
 rescued by Gihámi, 59, 69
- Khálid, 12
- Khallukh, city in Túrán, 42, 44, 55, 61, 74, 90, 107, 112, 157, 242, 255
- Khán = Arjásp, 47, 51, 72
 of Chín, 199, 220
- Khairád, nonce name assumed by Asfandiyár, 146, 149
- Khashásh, Túránian hero, 46, 47
 made leader of the van, 46
- Khoiasan. *See* Khurásán.
- Khudai-náma (Bástán-náma), 24
- Khurásán, 28, 77
- Khuishíd, day, 92 *note*
- Khusiau. *See* Kai Khusiau.
- Khusrau Parwíz, Sháh, 294, 306
note
- Khyóns (Hryaonas), 13, 25
- Kishmar, place near Nishápúr, 27, 28, 35
 Cypress of, 27
 account of, 28, 34
 Gushtásp and, 34
- Ktesias, historian, 293
 his account of Semiramis, 293
Persica of, 293
- Kubád. *See* Kai Kubád.
- Kuhram, Túránian hero, 29
- Kuliam, brother or son of Arjásp, vii, 29, 46, 58, 89 *seq.*, 106 *seq.*, 112, 141, 159
 commands one wing of the host, 46
 in chief, 56
 sent by Arjásp to attack Balkh, 90
 his troops storm Balkh, burn the Fire-temple, and slay Zaidusht and the priests, 92
 stationed on the left, 95
 mortally wounds Faishid-waid, 95
 appointed by Arjásp to send away the spoil of Balkh in the charge of his younger brothers, 108
 commands the right, 110
 defeated by Asfandiyár, 110

Kuhram, bidden to prepare for war, 151
 retreats to the Brazen Hold, 152
 mistakes Bishútan for Asfandiyár, 152
 hears the cries of the Iránian watch from the Brazen Hold and takes counsel with Andarímán, 155
 makes for the Brazen Hold with his troops, 156
 pursued by Asfandiyár, 156
 encountered and taken prisoner by Asfandiyár, 157
 executed, 158 and *note*
 Kundui, Túránian hero, 94, 112
 stationed on the right, 94
 Kúr, river, 13
 Kuian, the, 166
 quoted, 166

L

LABARUM, the, 306 *note*
 Land of Darkness (the Gloom), 30
 Launderer, a, foster-father of Dáráb, viii, 292
 finds Dáráb in the Farát, 296
 and his wife adopt Dáráb, 297
 wife of, viii, 296 *seq.*
 informs Dáráb of his case, 300
 quits his home with his wife and Dáráb and settles elsewhere, 298
 becomes wealthy but sticks to trade, 298
 perturbed at Dáráb's youthful escapades, 298
 brings up Dáráb to be a cavalier, 299
 Dáráb's lack of natural affection for, 300
 and his wife sent for by Rashnawád, 304

Launderer and his wife inform Rashnawád of the case of Dáráb, 308

and his wife visit Dáráb after his accession to the throne, and are dismissed with presents, 311, 312,

Life, Water of, 30

Longimanus (Dirázdast), 281

Luhrásp, Sháh, v, vi, 10, 20, 21
 and *note*, 26, 29, 36, 38, 64, 66, 68, 80, 86, 87, 90 *seq.*, 98 *seq.*, 103, 104, 114, 141, 154, 155, 157, 159, 160, 167, 171, 180, 183, 205, 208, 243, 255, 281, 284

resigns the throne to Gushtásp and becomes a devotee, 31

converted by Zarduhsht, 33
 his advice to Gushtásp to resign the kingship to Asfandiyár, 66

opposes Kuhram, 91

slain, 91, 93, 99

Asfandiyár's vow to avenge, 103

M

MÁCHÍN (China), 142, 145

Madófiyát, mountain, 30

Magism, 11

Máhán, Iránian noble, 260, 263

Mahmúd, Sultán, vi, 30, 89, 116, 119

praise of, 30, 89, 118, 262

Mahaspand, father of Ádarbád, 16 *note*

Maidhyó-maungha, cousin and first convert of Zarduhsht, 17

Malcolm, Sir John, 30

Mání, heresiarch, 118 and *note*

Mansion of Gushtásp, Fire-temple, 75

Mansú I., Sámánid, 21

Marv, city and district, 29, 260, 261, 263

- Mas'ûdî, historian, 261, 293
 his version of the death of
 Rustam, 261
- Mázandarán, country (Hyrcania),
 116, 117, 203, 207, 220
- Mecca, 31, 166
- Mercury, planet, 243
- Mihr Bazarin, Fire-temple, 34
 established by Gushtásp, 34
- Mihr-i-Núsh, second son of As-
 fandiyár, 80, 283
 slain by Faránariz, 227
 his death reported to Asfan-
 diyár by Bahman, 227
 his corpse sent to Gushtásp,
 232
- Mihriáb, king of Kábul, 203
 daughter of = Rúdába, 203
- Minúchihri, Sháh, 12, 174, 252, 284
- Mirkhond, historian, 30
- Moses, prophet, 294
- Mountain, Old Man of the, 30
- Muhammad, the Prophet, 166
 quoted, 166
- Mutawakkal, Khalífa, 28
 and the Cypress of Kishmar,
 28

N

- NADR, son of Háriith, 166
 recites the story of Rustam
 and Asfandiyár at Mecca,
 166
 his fate, 166
- Náhíd. *See* Katáyún.
- Naishapur. *See* Nishápúr.
- Námkhást, Túránian hero, 24, 26
 goes as envoy to Gushtásp,
 37, 40
 returns with Gushtásp's an-
 swer, 44
 given command of the centre,
 56
 worsted by Gínámi, 59
- Narímán, great-grandfather of
 Rustam, 196, 199, 202, 242,
 262, 264, 266, 289

- Nastú (Bastavain, Bastvai), son
 of Zarir, v, 12, 25, 26
 his exploits foretold by
 Jámásp, 50
 given command of the rear,
 55
 fights victoriously, 60
 goes in search of Zarir, 67
 finds Zarir's corpse and la-
 ments over it, 67
 exhorts Gushtásp to avenge
 Zarir, 68
 goes forth with Gushtásp's
 steed and armour, 69
 challenges Bídrafsh, 69
 fights with Bídrafsh, 70
 attacks, with Asfandiyár and
 Núsh Ázar, the Túránians,
 71
 leads the host home, is given
 a command and invades
 Túrán, 74
 stationed on the Iránian
 left, 94
 commands the right, 109
- Naubahái, Fire-temple, 31
 Luhrásp retires to, 31
- Nile, 176, 188, 191, 245
- Nímruz, country,¹ 85, 248, 288
- Ninus, king, 292, 293
- Ninyas, son of Ninus, 293
- Nishápúr, city in Khurásán, 28
 seq., 291
- Nívzái, son of Gushtásp, v, 26
 his death foretold by Jámásp,
 50
 slain, 60
- Noldeke, Professor, 20, 21, 282
 quoted, 118
- Note on Pronunciation, 5
- Nuh II., Sámánid, 21
- Núsh Ázar, Fire-temple at Balkh,
 92 *note*, 173, 241, 255
 burnt by the Turkmans, 93
- Núsh Ázar, youngest son of
 Asfandiyár, 81, 166, 226,
 227, 283, 285

¹ See Vol. i. p. 396 *note*.

Núsh Ázai, attacks, with Nastú
and Asfandiyár, the Túránian host, 71
builder of a Fire-temple, 81
with Asfandiyár at Gumbadán, 98
informs Asfandiyár of Já-
másp's arrival, 98, 99
accompanies Asfandiyár from
Gumbadán, 103
slays Turkhán, 151
wangles with Zawáira, 226
slays Alwá, 226
slain by Zawáira, 227
his death reported to Asfandi-
yár by Bahman, 227
his corpse sent to Gushtásp,
232
Núshírwán, Sháh, 260
Núsh Zád = Mih-i-Núsh, 285 and
note

O

OLD Man of the Mountain, the,
30
Onnes, minister of Ninus, 292,
293
Oxus, river (Jílún), 12, 29

P

PAHLAVÍ, Texts, 13, 14, 24, 30
language (middle Persian),
24, 26
Paighú = Túránian, 13, 21 *note*, 38
note, 41 *note*, 44 *note*
Páís, county, 293
Páithia, 10
Hystaspes, governor of, 10
Páithian dynasty, 281
Pát-khusiau, brother of Gushtásp,
26
Peisepolis (Istakhr), 293
buildings at, attributed to
Humái, 293
Persia, 306 *note*
Persians, the, 74
Persica, of Ktesias, 293

Peshó-tanu (Bishrútan), 12
Pleiades, constellation, 110, 131
Pourushaspa, father of Zaidulshst,
14, 15, 17
Pronunciation, Note on, 5
Púlád, a div, 204
Púrándukht, Sháh, 294
Purmáya, brother of Farídún,
261

R

RAI, city and district near Tih-
rán, 14, 18
Rakhsh, Rustam's steed, 117,
184, 192, 198, 207, 208,
214, 219, 228 *seq.*, 234 *seq.*,
266, 275, 276, 306
referred to, 199
wounded by Asfandiyár, 229
returns home without Rus-
tam, 229
Rustam's thought of aban-
doning, 235
healed by the Símurgh, 237
tries to save Rustam, 270
falls into the pit, 270
body of, taken from pit by
Farámaiz, 275
tomb of, 276
lord of = Rustam, 306
Ram, the, constellation, 129
Rashnawád, captain of the host
to Humái, ix, 301 *seq.*
assembles troops, 301
Dáráb enlists under, 301
his host reviewed by Humái,
302
marches on Rúm, 302
and the adventure of the
ruined vault, 303
gives presents to Dáráb, 304
questions Dáráb, 304
sends for the launderer and
his wife, 304
and Dáráb defeat the Rú-
mans, 305, 306
praises Dáráb, 305, 306

- Rashnawád, offers Dáráb the spoil, 306
 grants peace to Cæsar, 307
 returns to Irán, 307
 hears from the launderer and his wife about the case of Dáráb, 308
 writes to Humái about Dáráb, 308
 appears with Dáráb before Humái, 309 *seq.*
- Religion, War of the, 19, 26
 its two campaigns, 29
- Remus *See* Romulus.
- Ridge of Gushtásp, 29
- Romulus and Remus, foundling legend of, 293
- Rúdába, mother of Rustam, viii, 182, 184, 190 *note*, 278
 fasts in sorrow for Rustam, 278
 her frenzy, 278
 regains her wits, 279
 referred to, 190, 289
 her lamentation, 289
- Rúdbái, district, 30
- Rukhs, Battle of the Twelve, referred to, 29
- Rúm, the Eastern Roman Empire, ix, 75, 76, 102, 180, 188, 262, 301, 305, 307
 brocade of, 295
 ravaged by Rashnawád and Dáráb, 307
- Rúmians, the, viii, 173, 205, 292, 305
 invade Irán, 301
 defeated by Rashnawád and Dáráb, 305 *seq.*
- Rustam, Iránian hero, vii, viii, 9, 22, 30, 50, 73, 86, 116 *seq.*, 165, 166, 173 *seq.*, 254 *seq.*, 265 *seq.*, 278, 279, 281 *seq.*, 287, 289
 and Zál welcome Gushtásp to Sistán, 85
 rivalry in legend between Asfandiyár and, 116
 Haft Khwán of, compared with that of Asfandiyár, 117
- Rustam, Asfandiyár's fight with, Story of, vii, viii, 166 *seq.*
 recited by Nadi, son of Háith, at Mecca, 166
 referred to, 169, 170, 306
 Gushtásp bids Asfandiyár go against, 173
 Asfandiyár's message to, 179
 his life attempted by Bahman, 184
 his interview with Bahman, 185
 entertains Bahman, 186
 his great appetite, 186, 210
 jests with Bahman on his small appetite, 186
 sends Zawára and Farámarz to bid Zál and Rúdába prepare to receive Asfandiyár, 190
 goes to the Hírmund, 191
 parleys with Asfandiyár, 192 *seq.*
 invites Asfandiyár to visit him, 193
 accepts Asfandiyár's invitation to a feast, 195
 tells of his interview with Asfandiyár to Zál, 196
 his indignation at not being summoned to the feast, 197
 sets forth to reproach Asfandiyár, 198
 his wrangle with Asfandiyár, 198 *seq.*
 demands his proper seat at the feast, 200
 and Zál vilified by Asfandiyár, 201
 details his ancestry, 202
 recounts Sám's exploits, 202
 his own exploits, 203, 207
 his patents from Kal Káús and Kai Khusrau, 203
 aged six hundred years, 204
 ties a handgrip with Asfandiyár, 209
 accepts Asfandiyár's challenge, 209

Rustam, asks for neat wine, 211
 makes fresh overtures to Asfandiyár, 211 *seq.*
 addresses the royal tent-enclosure, 215
 bids Zawára bring him his arms, 218
 rejects Zál's counsels, 220
 arms for battle, 222
 gives Zawára charge of the troops, 222
 goes with Zawára to the Hírmund, 222
 instructs Zawára, 222
 crosses the Hírmund and summons Asfandiyái to the combat, 223
 suggests a general engagement, 224
 his distress at death of Núsh Ázar and Mihr-i-Núsh, 228
 offers to surrender Zawára and Farámaiz to Asfandiyár, 228
 wounded by Asfandiyár, 229
 flees from Asfandiyár, 229
 sends Zawára with a message to Zál, 230
 parleys with Asfandiyár, 231
 recrosses the Hírmund, 231
 his kin's grief over his wounds, 234
 bids the leeches to attend to Rakhsh first, 234
 his despair, 235
 advised by Zál, 235
 Zál summons the Símurgh to the aid of, 235 *seq.*
 healed by the Símurgh, 237
 instructed by the Símurgh how to overcome Asfandiyái, 237 *seq.*
 cuts the fatal branch of tamáusk, 239
 prepares the arrow, 240
 summons Asfandiyár to renew the fight, 240

Rustam, makes a final effort for peace with Asfandiyái, 241 *seq.*
 bewails Asfandiyár to Bishútán, 246
 Asfandiyái confides Bahman to, 248
 foretells an evil future for, 248
 laments Asfandiyái, 250
 warned by Zawára against Bahman, 250
 sends Asfandiyár's corpse to Gushtásp, 251
 Bahman remains with, 252, 256
 instructs Bahman, 256
 writes to Gushtásp to excuse himself in the matter of Asfandiyár, 256
 his overtures to Gushtásp supported by Bishútán, 257
 Gushtásp accepts the excuses of, and writes to, 257
 requested by Gushtásp to send back Bahman, 258
 equips Bahman for his journey, 258
 and Shaghád, Story of, viii, 260 *seq.*
 provenance of, 260 *seq.*
 death of, 261, 273, 289
 versions of, 261
 and the tribute of Kábul, question of, 265
 Shaghád and the king of Kábul plot against, 265
 takes up Shaghád's cause, 267
 prepares to occupy Kábul with a host, 268
 persuaded by Shaghád to go with Zawára and a small escort, 268
 pardons king of Kábul, 269
 is entertained by him, 269
 goes hunting with Zawára, 270
 falls a victim to treachery, 270
 Shaghád glories over, 271

Rustam, slays Shaghád, 272
 last words of, 272
 his corpse taken from the
 pit by Farámarz, 274
 his obsequies, 274 *seq.*
 and Artabanus, 282
 burial-place of, 287
 the scene of the battle
 between Bahman and
 Farámarz, 287

S

SADA, feast of, 309
 Safid Rúd, river, 13, 16
 Sagastán (Sistán), 13
 Sahl, son of Máhán, Iránian noble,
 260, 261, 263
 Salm, eldest son of Farídún, 205,
 261, 284
 Sám, grandfather of Rustam, 14,
 15, 58, 62, 63, 196, 198 *seq.*,
 242, 262 *seq.*, 266, 267, 274,
 285, 286, 289, 290
 his exploits against diogen
 and div recounted by Rus-
 tam, 202
 Sanja, a div, 204
 Sapad. *See* Spentó-dáta.
 Sapandármad, ameshaspenta, 18
 Sapor II. (Shápúr), 13
 Saigon I. of Agani, 293
 founding legend of, 293
 Sári, city in Mázandarán, 174
 Sarv, king of Yaman, 260
 = Ázád Sarv, *q.v.*
 Sásán, son of Bahman, 290
 disinherited and flees from
 court, 291
 account of, 291
 Sásánian, race and dynasty, 10, 13,
 281, 282
 Saturn, planet, 68, 89, 136, 154,
 159, 220, 233
 Savalán, mountain in Ázarbáiján,
 14
 Sáwa, Iránian hero, 154

Sáwa, left in charge of the Brazen
 Hold by Asfandiyár, 154
 Scythians, the, 11
 their wars with Darius Hys-
 taspis, 11
 Semiramis, queen, 292, 293
 legend of, 292, 293
 and Humái, 293
 Seven Stages, the, 118, 119, 121,
 135
 story of, vi, vii, 116 *seq.*
 Asfandiyár returns from the
 Brazen Hold by, 162
 Shaghád, son of Zál, viii, 260, 261,
 263 *seq.*
 Story of Rustam and, viii,
 260 *seq.*
 provenance of, 260 *seq.*
 birth of, 263
 the astologists' evil prognos-
 tic of, 264
 sent to be brought up at
 Kábul, 264
 marries the daughter of the
 king of Kábul, 264
 and the king of Kábul plot
 against Rustam, 265 *seq.*
 his pretended quarrel with
 the king of Kábul, 266
 goes to Zábúl, 267
 his cause taken up by Rus-
 tam, 267
 persuades Rustam to go with
 Zawára and a small escort
 to Kábul, 268
 warns the king of Kábul of
 Rustam's coming, 269
 glories over Rustam, 271
 slain by Rustam, 272
 his corpse burnt, 277
 Sháhnáma, 9 *seq.*, 19, 20, 22 *seq.*,
 27 *seq.*, 293, 294
 editions of, 3
 Shápúr, son of Uimuzd (Sapor
 II), 16 *note*
 Shahrivár, day, 310
 Shidasp, son of Gushtásp, v, 26,
 50, 55, 57, 58

- Shidasp, his death foretold by
 Jámásp, 50
 given command of one wing,
 55
 slain, 58
- Shúkhún, a Zábulí, 184
 guides Bahman to Rustam,
 184
- Shirú, son of Gushtásp, v, 26
 slain, 57
- Shúlak, Gushtásp's steed (Dakíkí),
 73
 Asfandiyái's steed (Fidausi),
 126
- Sigzian, a native of Sigz, 226 and
note
 = Zawára, 226
 = Zawára and Farámarz, 228
 = Rustam, 241
- Sikandar (Alexander the Great),
 30
- Silvia, vestal, 293
- Simmas, chief herdsman of Ninus,
 292
- Símurgh, mythical bird, vii, 117,
 132 *seq.*, 166, 201, 235 *seq.*,
 246, 248, 255
 young of, 201
 summoned to Rustam's aid
 by Zál, 235 *seq.*
 heals Rustam and Rakhsh,
 237
 instructs Rustam how to
 overcome Asfandiyái, 237
seq.
- Sind, region and river (Indus), 75,
 180, 203, 277
 kings of, send tribute to
 Gushtásp, 75
- Sipand. *See* Spentó-dáta.
- Sístán (Sagustán), county,¹ vi, 13,
 17, 29, 85, 86, 89, 94, 173,
 174, 201, 220, 248, 261, 264,
 267
 lake of, 239 *note*
 mourning in, for Rustam, 278
 invaded by Bahman, 284 *seq.*
- Sitúh, Túránian hero, 86, 87
 goes as a spy to Irán and
 reports to Aijásp, 86, 87
- Siyáwush, son of Kai Káuś, 174,
 176, 192, 208, 272
- Smerdis, the false, 11
- Song of Asfandiyái, 129
- Spand-dát (Spentó-dáta, Asfandi-
 yár), 24 *seq.*
- Spand-dát-náma (Asfandiyái-ná-
 ma), 26, 27
- Spendyád. *See* Spentó-dáta.
- Spentó-dáta (Spand-dát, Asfandi-
 yái), 12
- Spentó-dáta (Spendyád, Sipand,
 Sapad), mountain, 30, 116,
 117
- Spitáma, name of family of which
 Zarduhsht was a member,
 15
- Stages, the Seven. *See* Seven
 Stages.
- Súdába, wife of Kai Káuś, 174
 referred to, 174
- Suhráb, son of Rustam, 204
- Surúsh, angel, 170, 253
- T
- TABARÍ, historian, 261
 his version of the death of
 Rustam, 261
 on the etymology of Dáráb,
 297 *note*
- Table of Contents, v
- Tamarisk, 239, 240, 243, 246, 247,
 256
 branch of, fatal to Asfandi-
 yár, 239 and *note*
- Taráz, city in Turkistán and dis-
 trict in Badakhshán, 157
- Tennyson, quoted, 281
- Tiber, river, 294
- Tihán, city, 14, 18
- Tái, second son of Farídún, 42,
 206, 261, 284
- Túrán, 12, 20 *seq.*, 25, 32, 41, 43,
 45, 53, 61 and *passim*

¹ See Vol 1. p 396 *note*

- Túránians (Turkman), the, v, 13, 20, 116
- Turkhán, Túránian hero, 151
sent with troops to reconnoitre outside the Brazen Hold, 151
slain by Núsh Ázar, 151
- Turkistán, 55
- Turkman (Túránians), the, v, 22, 25, 36, 39, 40, 44, 47, 51, 52, 61, 72, 90 *seq.*, 98 *seq.*, 104 *seq.*, 108, 110, 113, 114, 116, 135, 152, 157, 158, 171, 173, 206, 254
army of, surrenders to Asfandiyár, 72, 113
monarch of = Arjâsp, 74
led by Kuhram, storm Balkh, burn the Fire-temple, and slay Zarduhsht and the priests, 92, 93
take Gushtâsp's daughters captive, 93
kingdom of, offered by Asfandiyár to Gurgsâr in return for faithful service, 120
ordered by Arjâsp to march out from the Brazen Hold in force to attack the invaders under Bishûtan, 152
hear the cries of the Iránian watch in the Brazen Hold, 155
refused quarter by Asfandiyár, 158
- Tús, son of Naudar, 57, 116, 207, 208
- Tús, city in Khurásân, 28, 202
Sâm and the dragon of, 202

U

- ULÁD, a div, 204 *note*
- Umar Khayyám, 90
- Urmuzd, the Good Principle, 15 *seq.*

V

- Vandaremaini (Andarimán), 13
- Venus, planet, 159
- Vidrafsh (Bídirafsh), 24, 26
- Vishtâsp (Vistâspa, Gushtâsp), 24
- Vistâspa (Vishtâsp, Gushtâsp), 11
- Vistâsp-sâst, 11
- Vohu Manau (Vohúman, Bahman), ameshaspenta, 16, 17
- Vohúman *See* Vohu Manau.

W

- WATER of Life, 30
- War of the Religion, the, 19, 26, 29
its two campaigns, 29
- West, Dr E W, referred to, 11
- White Castle, 30
Div. *See* Div.

X

- XERXES, king, 282
Asfandiyár and, 282

Y

- YAMAN, region in south-western Arabia, 260
- Yátkái-i-Zairián, Pahlavi Text, 13, 24, 27 and *note*
compared with Dakíkí's work, 24 *seq.*
- Yazdagird III., Sháh, 294

Z

- Zábul, Zábulistán, country,¹ vii, 85, 86, 167, 169 *seq.*, 173, 175 *seq.*, 181 *seq.*, 193, 194, 212, 215, 219, 223, 224, 235, 248, 251, 252, 255, 256, 258, 265, 266, 273, 275 *seq.*, 281, 283, 285 *seq.*
- Gushtâsp goes to, 85
- Moon of = Rúdába, 190 and *note*

¹ See Vol. i. p. 396 *note*.

Zábul, called "Babblestead" by Asfandiyái, 216
 Bahman's sojourn in, 252, 256
 pillaged by Bahman, 287
 Bahman quits, 290
 Zábulí, a native of Zábul, 212, 277
 a, made king of Kábul, 277
 Zahhák, Sháh, 12, 180, 203, 204, 284
 Zairi-vairi (Zairí, Zariadres), 12
 Zál, father of Rustam, vii, viii, 11, 14, 15, 58, 86, 169, 173 *seq.*, 182 *seq.*, 196, 197, 200, 204, 210, 212, 219 *seq.*, 230, 231, 234 *seq.*, 240 *seq.*, 246, 247, 255, 256, 261, 263 *seq.*, 277 *seq.*, 281, 283, 285, 289, 290
 and Rustam welcome Gushtásp to Sistán, 85
 hears of Bahman's approach, 182
 his interview with Bahman, 183
 gives Bahman a guide to conduct him to Rustam, 184
 and Rúdába bidden by Rustam to prepare to receive Asfandiyái, 190
 Rustam recounts his interview with Asfandiyár to, 196
 and Rustam vilified by Asfandiyár, 201
 receives a message from Rustam by Zawáia, 230
 grieves over Rustam's wounds, 234
 summons the Símuigh to Rustam's aid, 235
 goes to Rustam and Asfandiyái, 247
 forebodes Rustam's future, 247
 father of Shaghád, 260, 263
 sends Shaghád to be brought up at Kábul, 264
 laments for Rustam, 273

Zál, sends Farámarz against Kábul, 274
 bids Rúdába to cease to mourn for Rustam, 278
 receives and replies to Bahman's hostile message, 285
 goes to meet Bahman, 286
 his palace sacked, 286
 Bishútan intercedes for, 288
 released and returns to his palace, 289
 Zál-i-zai *See* Zál.
 Zandavasta, 11 *seq.*, 30, 36, 41, 43, 51, 77, 82, 85, 100, 173, 176, 216, 241, 294, 299, 309
 sent by Gushtásp to every clime, 77
 burnt by the Tuikmans at Balkh, 92
 Zairathushtra. *See* Zairduhsht.
 Zairduhsht (Zairathushtra, Zoio-aster), v, vi, 9 *seq.*, 23 *seq.*, 27, 28, 33 *seq.*, 42, 51, 77, 173, 206, 216, 217, 241, 255
 meaning of, 13
 legend of, 14 *seq.*
 converts Gushtásp, 33
 success of his Evangel, 34
 plants the Cypress of Kishmar, 34
 advises Gushtásp not to pay tribute to Aijásp, 35
 referred to, 36, 38, 41
 slain at Balkh, 92, 93
 amulet given to Asfandiyár by, 130
 Zariadres (Zairi-vairi, Zairí), 26
 Zairí (Zairi-vairi, Zariadres), brother of Gushtásp, v, 12, 13, 24 *seq.*, 37, 41 *seq.*, 49 *seq.*, 60 *seq.*, 73, 94, 109, 169, 181, 193, 254, 261
 Love-story of, 26, 27
 Death-story of, 26, 27
 converted by Zairduhsht, 33
 answers, in conjunction with Asfandiyár and Jámásp, Aijásp's letter, 42

- Zarír, his death foretold by
 Jámásp, 51
 receives the standard from
 Gushtásp and the command
 of the centre, 55
 his prowess, 61 *seq.*
 slain by Bidinafsh, 63
- Zarír-náma, 26, 27
- Zartusht Bahrám Pazhdú, author
 of the Zartusht-náma, 18
- Zartusht-náma, poem, 18
- Zawára, brother of Rustam, vii,
 viii, 173, 174, 182 *seq.*, 187,
 191, 218, 222, 225 *seq.*, 230,
 231, 234, 250, 260, 261, 268,
 270, 273, 275
 referred to, 186, 228
 and Farámarz sent by Rustam
 to bid Zál and Rúdába pre-
 pare to receive Asfandiyár,
 190
 brings Rustam's armour, 218
 put in charge of the troops, 222
 goes with Rustam to the
 Hirmund, 222
- Zawára, Rustam's instructions to,
 222
 provokes the Iránians to
 combat, 225
 slays Núsh Ázar, 227
 goes in quest of Rustam, 230
 takes from Rustam a message
 for Zál, 230
 grieves over Rustam's wounds,
 234
 goes to Rustam and Asfandi-
 yár, 247
 warns Rustam against Bah-
 man, 250
 and a small escort accompany
 Rustam to Kábul, 268
 goes hunting with Rustam, 270
 falls a victim to treachery,
 270, 273
 death of, 273
 his body taken from the pit
 by Farámarz and buried, 275
- Zira, Túránian hero, 272
- Zoroaster. *See* Zarduhsht.
- Zoroastrians, 17

END OF VOL. V.